

SOURCES OF REPRESSION, AGGRESSION AND LIBERATION  
IN ERICH FROMM AND HERBERT MARCUSE



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2017

SOURCES OF REPRESSION, AGGRESSION AND LIBERATION  
IN ERICH FROMM AND HERBERT MARCUSE

Thesis submitted to the  
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Philosophy

by

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Boğaziçi University

2017

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in Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse

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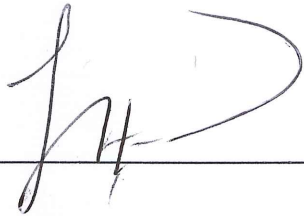
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## ABSTRACT

### Sources of Repression, Aggression and Liberation

in Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse

Why humans are the only species that kills systematically? What are the sources of aggression? What are the unconscious mechanisms through which repression of instincts leads to an increase in aggression? How do social institutions in an alienated society affect the human soul? In which ways do these institutions limit the possibilities for self-realization? How can a non-repressive society be constructed? To answer these questions, I have analyzed the theories of Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse. They both make a synthesis of Freud's account of repression and Marx's account of alienation. Whereas Freud claims that aggression is the inevitable result of repression, which increases with civilization, Fromm and Marcuse make a critique of capitalism to reveal how the current social system transforms human nature. For Freud, with the development of civilization, there was an inevitable tradeoff between freedom and security, which progressed in the same context with the repression of the Pleasure Principle by the Reality Principle. In contrast, Fromm's distinction between benign (self-preservation) and malign (harm another being willingly) aggression and Marcuse's distinction between Basic Repression and Surplus Repression provide useful theoretical tools to overcome the pessimism of Freud regarding the possibilities of liberation. Whereas Fromm analyses the specific social character shaped by capitalism, Marcuse emphasizes the specific Reality Principle of capitalism (Performance Principle) to explain the social and psychological dynamics behind alienation. Fromm's account of existential passions and Marcuse's notion of

negativity (power to negate) provide us important tools to envision the possibilities of liberation from a repressive social order.



## ÖZET


### Erich Fromm ve Herbert Marcuse'de Bastırma, Saldırganlık ve Özgürleşmenin Kökenleri

Neden sadece insanlar sistematik olarak öldürür? Saldırganlığın kökenleri nelerdir? Saldırganlığın artışına sebep olan bastırma mekanizması hangi bilinçaltı yollarla çalışır? Yabancılaşmış bir toplumda sosyal kurumlar insan ruhuna nasıl etki eder? Bu kurumlar hangi yollarla insanın kendini gerçekleştirmesini kısıtlar? Baskıcı olmayan bir toplum nasıl kurulabilir? Bu sorulara cevap verebilmek için, Erich Fromm ve Herbert Marcuse'un teorilerini inceledim. Her ikisi de Freud'un bastırma kuramıyla Marx'ın yabancılaşma kuramını harmanlamıştı. Freud saldırganlığın sebebinin içgüdülerin bastırılması olduğunu düşünür. Freud'a göre uygarlık geliştikçe insan ruhunda Gerçeklik İlkesi Haz İlkesini daha çok bastırır. Bu nedendir ki toplumsal güvenlik için bireysel özgürlüklerin bir kısmından feragat edilmelidir. Öte yandan Fromm, insanın kendi canını saldırılara karşı korumasıyla (yararlı saldırganlık), diğer bir canlıya bilip isteyerek acı çektirmesini (zararlı saldırganlık) birbirinden ayırır. Marcuse ise temel baskı ( güvenlik için hazzın bastırılması) ve artık baskı (kapitalist sistemin dayattığı bastırma) arasında bir ayırım yapmıştır. Her iki teorisyenin de amacı Freud'un özgürleşmenin imkansızlığına dair karamsarlığını aşmak için yeni kavramsal araçlar geliştirmektir. Fromm yabancılaşmanın temelindeki sosyal ve psikolojik dinamikleri açıklamak için sosyal karakter kavramını kullanır. Marcuse ise kapitalizmin Gerçeklik İlkesi olan Performans İlkesinden yola çıkacaktır. Fromm'un "varoluşsal tutkuları" ya da "karakter kaynaklı tutkuları" ile Marcuse'un

olumsuzlama (karşı çıkma gücü) kavramı sayesinde kapitalizmin baskısı altında yabancılaşmış bir toplumda özgürleşmenin yollarını düşüneceğiz.







*Dedicated to my bighearted family,*

*Barış Parkan, Mehtap, Hazal and my natural born philosopher cat Noa.*

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

I wanted to study aggression for more than a decade. I think that in all of us there is love and hatred together and these emotions can turn into each other in the blink of an eye. I am obsessed to understand why humans are the only species that kill members of their own species systematically. What is a legitimate defense for self-preservation? Do we really have to hate each other that much or is it just because of the system of capitalism that alienates people in a very subtle way. Is the modern individual obliged to live in an irrational consumer society to replace his promised land? Is destructiveness really universal in all humanity? Are we all craving for blood in the deep of our reckless souls conditioned by capitalist order? What can be done to turn hatred into love without sterilizing our instincts in the mechanism of repression? These were the questions in my mind that made me start to work on this thesis. Let me now briefly introduce the main themes that are coming up in the following chapters.

In the second chapter “Freudian Legacy”, I will shortly elaborate Freud’s main ideas about repression, sources of aggression and the possibilities for liberation, since it would be impossible to understand Fromm’s and Marcuse’s ideas on this topic, without highlighting what they have taken from Freud and in which respects they diverge from Freud. I have organized this chapter by separating early Freud from late Freud, since Fromm and Marcuse have opposite ideas about the issue of which part of Freud is more valuable when making a radical criticism of capitalism.

According to the Freudian Theory of Instincts (Libido Theory) there are two basic instincts: sexuality and self-preservation, which are in conflict. While sexuality

is controlled by the Pleasure Principle and seeks for immediate gratification, self-preservation is guided by the Reality Principle and it leads the organism to postpone immediate gratifications, for the sake of achieving security. With the development of culture and civilization, there was an inevitable exchange between freedom and security, which progressed in parallel with the repression of the Pleasure Principle by the Reality Principle.

The history of humanity is also history of the repression of our basic instincts. Since sexual competitiveness and self-preservation are in conflict, sexual instincts have to be repressed. Repression and aggression are unavoidable to achieve cultural development; they stem both from the fact that we have infinite desires and finite resources (principle of scarcity) and also from the Oedipus Complex. Aggression was initially related with self-preservation and sexuality.

Humans need to work to satisfy their needs. Since work is like toil and the natural sources are rare, when people are trying to satisfy their vital needs, they have to use aggression towards others, to protect and increase the resources that they own. Similarly, sexual aggression is caused by the competition among males or for the protection of his partner from his rivals.

In addition to this, aggression is related to repression of sexual instincts with the development of culture. One has to repress his aggression and sexuality in order to be in community. Freud claims that repression is unavoidable in every society, based on his assumptions about the Oedipal Complex. In this scenario boy has to compete with his father to be with his mother. This incestuous relationship has to be avoided because it is chaotic for the community and goes against the reproduction.

What man can do to be liberated according to Freud? He can never be completely liberated. Also a totally free libidinous energy is devastating for the man

and for his community. On the other hand, the excessive repression of sexuality will cause mental illnesses like neurosis or psychosis. However, man can be aware of his unconscious processes to a certain level. The more one gets aware of the repression and the unconscious processes, the more he is liberated.

After the World War, Freud thinks that aggression is also a basic instinct besides self-preservation and sexuality. He becomes more pessimist about human nature. He now thinks that no matter how hard people try, there is a basic killing instinct in humans. To explain this aggression, he needs to set a new dichotomy besides the Pleasure Principle and Reality Principle dichotomy.

According to late Freud, the two basic instincts in humans are the Life (Eros) and Death Instinct (Thanatos), which are essentially in conflict. Eros contains all the instincts that concerns preservation of life, love and compassion, while Thanatos aims to bring the organism back to the inorganic state and inertia. Since life is full of pain and suffering that is unbearable for the organism, he wants to run away from the pain (Nirvana Principle), and wants to die. Hence, aggression is just an appendix, a mild version of the Death Instinct.

In the conflict between Eros and Thanatos, the latter is transformed into aggression towards others or towards oneself. To explain this conflict, Freud revises his early theory of Pleasure Principle and Reality Principle. In this third theory, mind is divided into three parts, which are called the Id, the Ego and the Superego.

In case of the internalization of aggression, there emerges feelings of guilt, the need for punishment and the fear of loss of love that give birth to the Superego, which dictates and represses the Id. Id is the primitive self that is the center of sexuality and aggression, which was formerly called as the unconscious and preconscious and theorized under the label of Pleasure Principle. Between the

Superego and the Id works the Ego (Consciousness or the former Reality Principle) that tries to repress the Id in favor of the Superego, in order to conform to social norms.

Although the Id and the Superego fight against each other, they also have many similarities: They are both beyond time and space. Superego is destructive and serves the Death Instinct. Similarly, the Id becomes destructive if it is untamed. The untamed Id is as destructive as the Death Instinct. This is why the Life Instinct utilizes the Reality Principle to repress the Id constantly. However the equilibrium is always distorted in favor of the Death Instinct.

Whether the organism replies with sublimation (adaptation to society) or reaction formation (neurosis) to the repression of the Ego, it is always distorted. The guilt feelings and the remorse will always be with man whether he sublimates or reacts to repression. The aggression is natural and because of repression it is unavoidable.

Ego is the awareness of the self against the life-threatening situations around the organism, to sublimate, to postpone or to cancel the pleasure in order to adapt to the environment. This is why there are laws, morality and culture to protect the self from its destructive instincts. But they will never be sufficient to stop the innate Death Instinct according to Freud.

In the third chapter of my thesis, I will focus on Erich Fromm's account. For Fromm, human nature is not stable as Freud assumes. Since it evolves through history and society, it is important to analyze the social dynamics. This is the reason why Fromm makes a synthesis of Marx's account of alienation with Freud's account of repression. His aim is to explain the interaction of the economic base with ideology and consciousness. The economic base is mediated through institutions like

the family. On the one hand, the social character shapes the ideology and the consciousness and on the other hand, the ideology and forms of consciousness shape the family and the social system.

Every society has a specific character. The character of capitalist society is the anal-hoarding character. Economic necessity caused the development of this specific character besides genetic and psychic causes. Fromm criticizes the Reality Principle of capitalism by emphasizing how it leads to an increase in repression and aggression. This is why Fromm develops the notion of the anal-hoarding character and later he calls it “patriarchistic-acquisitive self”, which is a symptom of alienation.

Alienation is specific to humans because it is the only species-being that lives, plans, creates, changes the nature around him and he is partly aware of what he has done. He can be aware of both his potentialities and his impotence. He also knows that he will die. Being thrown into this world without his will, he copes with existential problems. His only salvation is to be aware of his impotencies and to create within his capabilities.

Capitalism in an alienated production-consumption cycle takes away this awareness from man. Man becomes an ordinary means to an end and the slave of the commodities he produces. He works in extreme specialization to satisfy his survival needs. Since the work is alien to him and imposed on him, he becomes alienated from himself and others. The cause of the anal-hoarding character is the capitalist system and the alienation that causes depression, isolation, unrelatedness, hostility of the individual towards others, the world and towards himself.

For Fromm, malignant aggression or destructiveness is caused by the system, but Freud confuses different types of aggression. There are benign and malignant

aggressions. Whereas benign aggression is common to all animals and caused by self-preservation, the malignant aggression is peculiar to mankind and is caused by the existential (that Fromm calls character-rooted) passions. Destructiveness is a by-product of alienation in capitalism.

Destructiveness cannot be explained merely through childhood traumas as Freud had done. The family which shapes the child is also a mediator of the mainstream ideology. Domination is carried and reproduced in institutions such as the family and the school. Since liberation is only possible by relating to oneself, others and to nature, in a way that would enhance self-realization, Fromm claims that overcoming capitalism and the alienation it produces is the most important precondition of liberation. To reach this goal, satisfaction of our existential needs is crucial. As a result, one feels alive, desires to be free rather than escaping from freedom and feels united with the world. Man learns just “to be” instead of owning something or someone.

In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I will analyze Herbert Marcuse’s account. Marcuse agrees with Fromm that in capitalism man has lost his freedom. He argues that the problem is in the Reality Principle of capitalism that represses the Id excessively. Just like Fromm distinguishes between benign and malignant aggression, Marcuse distinguishes between Basic and Surplus Repression. He argues that the main source of destructiveness is Surplus Repression. Marcuse criticizes Freud’s Reality Principle to be ahistorical. Since the instincts are socially and economically conditioned, they are historical. If the Reality Principle of capitalism (Performance Principle) is destroyed, then the Surplus Repression that is caused by capitalism would also cease to exist. We would then be left with only Basic Repression, which is not harmful at all.



We can interpret Freud's dichotomy between the Pleasure Principle and the Reality Principle as originating from the conflicting needs of man to be all alone and to be a part of society, respectively. That is called primary and secondary narcissism in Freud. The former means, being a subject to itself, and the latter means being a subject for another subject. On the one hand man has egoistic needs; on the other hand he wants social recognition and fears social exclusion.

According to Marcuse, this conflict belongs to capitalist, patriarchal society. In prehistoric matriarchal society there is love, work and pleasure lived communally. Such a peaceful society would be possible only in a non-repressive society. Freud has modeled his account of human nature from "homo-economicus" and the assumption that scarcity is inevitable. However, Marcuse argues that the Surplus Repression under the consumerist phase of capitalism is not unavoidable because of scarcity. The problem is not about the existence of scarcity but it is related with the distribution of scarcity. Relations of domination are produced by the Surplus Repression and they make people hostile to each other. Once this domination can be destroyed by a liberated libidinous energy then a free consciousness would be possible. As a result, liberated individuals could construe the free society.

Marcuse claims that the tension between Eros (life) and Thanatos (Death) can be avoided if they meet in the Nirvana Principle. It is the Reality Principle of capitalism (Performance Principle) that makes people depressed and lonely because of harsh competition and cruel ambitions. This is why the system has to be negated. Any activity that negates the system, such as atonal artistic creation or performance is valuable.

The aim of any organism is to run away from pain and suffering. Both Eros and Thanatos look for the same goal of reducing pain. However, this can be achieved

only in a non-repressive society. Therapy can transfer the past into the future and psychoanalysis can remind us of the prehistoric non-repressive society.

Psychoanalysis can help us reveal our fantasies and imagine new utopias. When these are combined with the release of libidinal energy and the perverse sexuality beyond the Reality Principle, we can achieve liberation by both transforming ourselves and also transforming the society we live in.

I will discuss the relation between repression and aggression in Freudian theories to construe a theoretical ground to Fromm's and Marcuse's critique of capitalism. Both Fromm and Marcuse have an agenda to liberate humanity. They rely on the power in us to overcome alienation and repression. Fromm will focus on origins and nature of aggression to transform this aggression into passion to create, to relate to the world and to others, while Marcuse will take aggression as an asset to break the Reality Principle of capitalism.

Finally, I will question whether the aggression is a basic instinct that can be transformed into love in the way of self-actualization in order to build a non-repressive society in solidarity to live humanely.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FREUDIAN LEGACY

In this chapter I will analyze Freudian psychoanalysis in two main sections as early and late Freud. Freud has a dualistic perspective in his theories (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.133). Early Freud consists of his theories before 1920s, while late Freud consists of theories after 1920s. In Freudian psychoanalysis aggression has a significant role after 1920s. Before 1920s, when Freudian psychoanalysis is based on Theory of the Instincts, there are two mechanisms in the mental system; working interactively to satisfy basic instincts “self-preservation” and “sexuality”. Later, Freud develops Eros and Death Instinct dichotomy besides self-preservation and sexuality. In this late theory, aggressive instinct is taken as a derivative to Death Instinct that works in service of the Eros to strengthen self-preservation (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.82). I try to answer whether aggression increases with the development of civilization due to repression of the Superego reinforced by Oedipus Complex.

In the first period of theory of instincts where the mental functioning swings between self-preservation and sexual instincts, Freud is more optimistic. Then he becomes pessimistic when he takes the organism in a perpetual struggle between Eros and Death Instinct, he thinks that destructiveness or aggression is necessarily a basic instinct besides sexual instincts that works in service of self-preservation to keep the organism alive against the Death Instinct that is with the individual since its birth.

## 2.1 Early Freud

Freud starts with the unconscious mental processes that exist in anyone to understand the pathological processes (like neuroses, hysterias) in mental life (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.13). He calls unconscious processes as primary processes in the mental development. These processes are latent and we are not aware of them but there are proofs like hypnosis, slips of tongue, dream and phantasy for their existence (Freud, 1912, 2002, p.260-1).

Freud's theory of unconscious is essentially based on pleasure-unpleasure dichotomy and repression that works in between. Unconscious exists when we are born. There is a part of conscious that is unconscious. When there is a situation that causes the organism to suffer, Pleasure Principle works in order to run away from this unwanted situation by repression of the Reality Principle (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.219).

Reality Principle does not prevent the pleasure in case this prevention is not necessary but Reality Principle looks for a secure and comfortable way of having pleasure (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.223).

### 2.1.1 The Reality Principle versus the Pleasure Principle

The organism seeks to satisfy its pleasures while protecting itself from the life threatening situations. The Pleasure Principle always seeks an immediate gratification while Reality Principle represents the external world that the organism is in.

Reality Principle provides the rules for the adaptation of the mental system to its environment. It means to be actively aware, conscious of the external world. On the contrary, Pleasure Principle looks for the satisfaction of instincts resulted from

unconscious processes. Freud focuses on the analysis of unconscious processes because they can be recognized easily. The unconscious process is based on Pleasure-Unpleasure Principle that he calls Pleasure Principle shortly (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.219).

Reality Principle serves to protect the organism against probable dangers. The external reality based on the economic principle provides the save of energy for the organism. We judge the world by Reality Principle try to guess whether fight (embrace the reality, postpone the pleasure) or flight (repress the thought and send it to unconscious to forget it) costs us to suffer less in a difficult situation (where egoistic needs and social norms are in conflict.). By reality-testing the organism learns to divide its thought activity as unconscious and conscious. What is repressed in the unconscious can be satisfied in dream and phantasy (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.222).

The organism tries to avoid unpleasure, this avoidance is provided by repression. The repressed material is set free when we sleep at night in our dreams. The external reality on the other hand is represented by the Reality Principle that contains sense perception and consciousness. Consciousness means being aware being attentive to stimuli in the external world (Freud, 1911,2002, p.220).

### 2.1.2 Dreams

To analyze unconscious Freud focuses on the interpretation of dreams because the mental apparatus is withdrawn from the external world and Reality Principle while dreaming (Freud, 1915, p.222). While dreaming at night, repression mechanism does not work. What is repressed in the unconscious may be sent back to conscious: but in a different form. Dreams are not compatible with the rationality of

the external reality. Laws of unconscious are different from that of conscious (Freud, 1912, 2002, p.266).

In the primary psychological process (unconscious) there is no distinction between what is real and what is unreal. On the contrary in the secondary process (conscious) there is a judgment of what is real and unreal (Freud, 1915, p.223).

Only when we dream at night the mental apparatus is beyond restrictions. This is the reason for Freud to give priority to analyze unconscious processes (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.219). "Psychoanalysis is founded upon the analysis of dreams" (Freud, 1912, 2002, p.265). Ego cannot control the dream process. It cannot function properly in dreams (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.225).

In dreams the residues of the previous day's memory is modified in thing-presentation, word presentation is not clear in dream formation (Freud, 1915, 2002 p.228-9). To be conscious of a conception or psychological activity thinking in pictures while dreaming is insufficient. These pictures are to be perceived and internalized by various feelings and sensations. The necessary connection between dreams and memories is hidden as repressed material in the unconscious. This is why the transference of the repressed material in psychoanalysis is that much of importance. However a serious amount of the unconscious material stays unconscious because of unconscious' resistance (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.21-2).The unconscious that is suppressed by the conscious to forget the early memories of infancy is active in dreams (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.420).

To cope with disturbance caused by repression of Reality Principle, dream and phantasy are very important. In dreams, Pleasure Principle reigns over Reality Principle. Reality-testing and censorship are obsolete in dreams. While dreaming ego is dissolved, a person is totally isolated from the external reality and turned into its

own dynamics and unconscious wishes that the Reality Principle has made the mind to forget (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.222-3).

Psychoanalysis aims to make the individual to remember what is forgotten by repression (Freud, 1915, p.404-5). In order to set free the mental apparatus to understand the content and the process of repression is very crucial.

What is repressed stays strong and active in the unconscious. In the early infancy the child can satisfy itself on its own body. This period is called “auto-erotic” period. Then begins the period of latency until puberty the child is disturbed because of constant repression. Finally with the puberty the organism focuses on finding an object of love. This last period is under the control of Pleasure Principle (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.222).

### 2.1.3 Repression

“The details of the process by which repression turns a possibility of pleasure into a source of unpleasure are not yet clearly understood or cannot be clearly represented “(Freud, 1920, p.11).

The repressed unconscious material is so strong that the mental apparatus works to repress it constantly. Repression mechanism provides the dynamic relation between the unconscious and conscious (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.149).

An external stimulus is internalized by rejection based on judgment to prevent the organism to suffer (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.146). Instincts evolve according to needs of conscious they can be repressed then can be called back or transformed into another form. What is repressed turns back eventually (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.154).

Repression has two phases. In the primary repression the repressed material is denied by conscious then in the secondary repression called repression proper repulsion is created by conscious against the repressed material (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.148). The content remains still in the unconscious this is the reason for repetition of repression to prevent the disturbance of conscious (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.149).

Freud claims that instincts evolve in time; there is a conflict between Ego instincts and sexual instincts that is controlled by the process of repression. Freud argues that there is not a clear cut distinction of conscious and unconscious and yet the reason behind instincts' evolution is repression (Freud, 1920, p.10).

Repression mechanism chooses between pleasure and unpleasure. It sends latter to unconscious. Mental apparatus works to save energy through the process of repression. Reality testing separates what is real from what is unreal (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.222). This separation means the separation of sexual instincts and phantasy from Ego instincts and consciousness (Freud, 1911, 2002, p.222). At the same time postponement of sexual satisfaction disturbs the mental apparatus.

Under the influence of the Ego's instincts of self-preservation, the Pleasure Principle is replaced by the Reality Principle. This latter principle does not abandon the intention of ultimately obtaining pleasure, but it nevertheless demands and carries into effect the postponement of satisfaction, the abandonment of a number of possibilities of gaining satisfaction and the temporary toleration of unpleasure as a step on the long indirect road to pleasure. The Pleasure Principle long persists, however, as the method of working employed by the sexual instincts, which are so hard to educate and starting from those instincts, or the Ego itself, it often succeeds in overcoming Reality Principle, to detriment of the organism as a whole (Freud, 1920, p.10).



The process of repression like a censorship mechanism provides that what is repressed stays in unconscious but some repressed material that is restored in the preconscious can be sent back to conscious in an unaware mode through dreams (Freud, 1915, 2002, p.149-150).

#### 2.1.4 Narcissism towards aggression

Until 1920 Freud relates aggression to sexuality. With the introduction of narcissism in 1914 he claims that aggression works for the self-preservation instinct of the Ego. Aggression is related to narcissism. When Ego is strong it takes pleasure in mastering (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.47).

The object is always to protect the organism. When the priority is to protect the organism before all, this causes isolation of the organism against others. On the one hand there is a need to be loved, to be united with others on the other hand; the egoism is so intense that it prevents possible relations that would end up in disappointment. So the Ego chooses to return to itself instead of bonding with others. Later he develops the activity-passivity dichotomy in the sense of finding a love object or fixing to its own Ego instead as a love object.

Freud argues that narcissism has two stages: In the first stage the organism as an infant does not realize that there is an external world. In the second stage, when the infant realizes the existence of external world, this time the Ego is centered to satisfy its needs through objects subsequent to self-preservation. This stage based on Ego-objects relationship is called secondary narcissism (Freud, 1914, 2002, p.76).

Freud claims that the early childhood sexual desires are fail to cohere with the social order. The child has to pass through the period of latency (Freud, 1915, p.404-5). It has a tendency to choose its mother or father as an object of love that result in

development of incestuous sexual desires. The repression is inevitable to protect the organism and the society.

To remedy this situation, narcissism of the individual is an important mechanism. Through narcissism Ego can isolate itself from painful external reality while focusing on its own egoistic needs (Freud, 1915, p.409). When the Ego fails to develop a secondary narcissism it gets stuck in the primary narcissism. It is fixed to itself and only its own needs. In addition to this, it cannot relate itself to external reality or to others. It is too painful. So the Ego chooses to live in phantasy (Freud, 1914, 2002, p.78).

In *Three Essays on Sexuality*, aggression is also related to infantile sexual needs and self-preservation of the Ego instinct. Sadism, masochism are embodied in sexual phantasy. The mental apparatus is focused on its own sexual desires because there is a pleasure-unpleasure dichotomy that is disturbed in favor of Pleasure Principle (Freud, 1905, 2015, p.18-19).

In sadistic-anal organization Ego instincts and narcissism are dominant in the sexual function (Freud, 1915, p.139). Sexual instincts and Ego are in service of narcissist subject when he inflicts pain upon someone and enjoys this. Sadism and masochism are the reflection of each other. There is a transformation of love into hate and vice-versa and the subject is identified himself with his victim (Freud, 1915, p.126-7).

The desire to cause pain to the sexual object and its opposite, the most frequent and most significant of all perversions, was designated in its two forms by von Krafft-Ebing as sadism or the active form, and the masochism or the passive form. Sadism would then correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual

impulse which has become independent and exaggerated and has been brought to the foreground by displacement (Freud, 1905, 2015, p.18).

Freud makes a distinction of active and passive phases in the sexual development of the infant. Anal and oral phase belong to pregenital passive phase while genital phase is taken as an active phase regarding to the issue of relating to another object of love (Freud, 1915, p.406). In the passive phase the infant is only interested in its own organs non-sexually (Freud, 1915, p.404-5).

“Behind the sadistic-anal phase of libidinal development we get a glimpse of a still earlier and more primitive stage of organization” (Freud, 1915, p.406).

This passivity may easily turn into an instinct for mastery combined with cruelty. Freud identifies sadism and masochism with passivity and immaturity of sexual organization (Freud, 1915, p.406).

In perversions active and passive forms operates together in the same person, not as a combination of these two but as antagonistic forces against each other in a vicious circle (Freud, 1915, p.127).

### 2.1.5 Oedipus Complex

From an early age following the primary narcissism the Ego perceives the external reality, a boy begins to feel love for his mother and he sees his mother as a love object while he takes his father a rival to himself to share his mother. The process is the same for a girl when she has some feelings for his father and gets into competition with her mother. This theory is called Oedipus Complex (Freud, 1915, p.413).

Freud claims that Oedipus Complex takes its stems from these infantile desires. The infant has to identify itself with the father or mother (Freud, 1923, p.32).

During this repression of incestuous feelings develops the father figure as an Ideal Ego to set the domination on the Ego. The sense of guilt may be developed in this process (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.35).

When other children appear on the scene the Oedipus Complex is enlarged into a family complex. This with fresh support from the egoistic sense of injury gives grounds for receiving the new brothers or sisters with repugnance and for unhesitatingly getting rid of them by a wish (Freud, 1915, p.414).

In family the complex gets much complicated due to the existence of other siblings. The rivalry in the family influences child's development of character and determines its social life later (Freud, 1915, p.415). Freud does not give up on Oedipus Complex in his later theories. On the contrary, to develop his later dichotomy of Eros and Death Instinct, he uses Oedipus Complex as a theoretical ground to constitute Superego-Ego ideal.

“Ego ideal is therefore the heir of the Oedipus Complex and thus it is the expression of the most powerful impulses and the most important libidinal vicissitudes of the Id” (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.36).

According to Freud, Oedipus Complex causes the formation of sense of guilt that the individual cannot understand the reason behind this sense (Freud, 1915, p.412). Repression functions to send back these egoistic incestuous instincts of the infant to its unconscious. This process is explained with neuroses and Ego's resistance to psychoanalysis (Freud, 1915, p.409). Jay argues that in 1920's matriarchal theory is used as a tool to criticize bourgeois society and Freud's Oedipus Complex is dethroned because it has lost its universality (Jay, 1976, p.94-95).

## 2.2 Late Freud

### 2.2.1 Sources of aggression

With the World War I, Freud begins to realize that aggression is a basic instinct besides self-preservation and sexuality. In his early theories aggressiveness is related to sexual perversities. With the introduction of narcissism aggression begins to take an individual dimension. Later the Theory of the Instincts is replaced by a brand new dichotomy of Life and Death Instinct. As the aggressive instinct is a very dominant instinct, it cannot be replaced or repressed completely in human beings, so aggressive instincts have to work for Eros-Life Instincts (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.40-41).

In this scenario the aggression must be necessary for the self-preservation. Freud explains that the destructiveness is inevitable for human beings because it is derived from Death Instinct which is a basic instinct to work for destruction of the organism to bring it to inanimate state. The role of the destructiveness is to protect the organism from its own Death Instinct.

When death is turned into destructive instinct it may be oriented towards the outer world (in form of basic needs like finding food and shelter as self-defense) or it is internalized and inhibited as sense of guilt and need for punishment in Superego that I will explain later. Destructiveness is a mild version of Death Instinct, so we are condemned to carry it whether in our unconscious-Superego as sense of guilt and need for punishment or we direct it is expressed in cruel acts. In the big picture, also civilization is obliged to inhibit the destructiveness to prevent its auto-destruction.

For Freud, sadism or masochism protects the organism from its own instincts of death. This is why Freud sets a duality between Life Instinct and Death Instinct.

Eros-Life Instinct strives for the conservation of the organism while Death Instinct aims to bring back organism to inertia, to inorganic state (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.40). In between, destructiveness works to soften the Death Instinct. Whether by externalization of destructiveness as a sadistic act or by internalization of it in Superego as sense of guilt or fear of authority, destructiveness works in silence (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.83-5).

According to Freud, there are Eros-Life Instinct that works with sexual instincts to protect the organism against dangers, to keep it alive and healthy mentally and physically (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.40-1). Destructiveness does the same when turned to outer world to protect the organism from dangers. Eros instincts' aim is to be united with people in communities. Social feelings are concretized as a superstructure based on jealousy (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.37).

Freud argues that destructive instincts work in the service of Eros for self-preservation as a softened version of the Death Instinct in the mental apparatus (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.40-41). Freud claims that Death Instinct works hand in hand with the sense of guilt and need for punishment that is internalized in the Superego by the Oedipus Complex with the development of civilization (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.83). This sense of guilt turns into conscience targeting Ego itself (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.84).

Civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security. We must not forget however, that in the primal family only its head enjoyed this instinctual freedom; the rest lived in slavish suppression. In that primal period of civilization, the contrast between a minority who enjoyed the advantages of civilization and a majority who were robbed of those advantages, was, therefore carried to extremes. As regards the primitive peoples who exist to-day,

careful researches have shown that their instinctual life is by no means to be envied for its freedom (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.73).

The conflict between the individual and the group cannot be surpassed for the reason that the liberty demand of the individual is always suppressed by the civilization. Egoistic needs are always in conflict with feelings of to be in union. Personal happiness is sacrificed for the perpetuation of the union (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.106). Death Instinct works to destroy the organism continuously. To avoid this danger of destruction, instinct is transformed into aggression towards others or towards the organism itself in order to save the day. This is the reason for Freud to argue that aggressive instinct is inevitable in man to protect the organism from its auto-destruction (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.78).

In perversities like sadism and masochism Freud underlines the inherent destructive dimension of the act on actor as well as the victim itself. If the destructive energy cannot be sublimated into desexualized energy then it can be used as an Ego-instinct for self-preservation. As a result the Ego becomes stronger against Death Instinct (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.45).

### 2.2.2 Superego, Ego and the Id

Several times Freud mentions Ego while explaining repression, reality-testing. It is in 1923 with *The Ego and the Id* mental map of the consciousness becomes more detailed, with the addition of an ideal Ego to consciousness. This ideal Ego brings forth the Oedipus Complex and its relation to sense of guilt, need for punishment and remorse carried through generations (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.34-5).

Between Superego and the Id there is a special connection however because of the self-preservation and narcissism of the Ego, Superego and Ego are separated

from each other. The sense of guilt and suffering caused by the Superego's moral dictations Ego has to keep its distance with Superego. This is the reason for the resistance of the Ego for transference in psychoanalysis. The connection with the repressed material is intermingled with the sense of guilt and need for punishment. "Ego is the actual seat of anxiety" (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.57).

The authority figure is internalized as Superego in order to provide the love of others in the society (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.89). The egoistic needs have to be suppressed or transformed into socially acceptable forms to protect the organism. The Oedipus Complex for instance represses incestuous feelings that are destructive for the infant and for the society. The individual has to give up certain amount of his personal happiness to save the organism from its own Death Instinct consequently the order in the community is protected (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.106).

The Id is under the domination of the mute but powerful death instincts, which desire to be at peace and prompted by the Pleasure Principle to put Eros, the mischief-maker, to rest; but perhaps that might be to undervalue the part played by Eros. (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.59)

The function of psychoanalysis is to lead consciousness to be aware of this latent repressed material in therapy. However there is a sense of guilt and anxiety that is developed by the mental apparatus to prevent this flux of consciousness with the Oedipus Complex. Freud explains that in this scheme the mental apparatus Reality Principle is no more reliable due to it is based on hypothetical or unreal threats caused by sense of guilt and anxiety in hysterias or neurosis (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.52).

Freud says that "Sublimation of an instinct is an especially conspicuous feature of cultural development; it is what makes it possible for higher physical activities, scientific, artistic or ideological, to play such an important part in civilized life" (Freud, 1930, 1989, p.51).



What is repressed and what becomes conscious again depends on our resistance to recovery transference. Transference means awareness of the repressed material throughout its transition from unconscious to preconscious and then to consciousness (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.50). Freud thinks that to give a dynamic sense to conscious and unconscious introduction of the term Ego as the consciousness and the Id as the unconscious that gets repressed by the Ego permanently except for dream and phantasy. The introduction of the term Ego means that a part of consciousness is indeed unconscious, and a part of unconscious waits in preconscious to be realized (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.15).

Since 1923 Freud calls unconscious as the Id. Preconscious and consciousness are parts of the Id as well. Ego represents the reason and the common sense (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.22-5). Freud sets a level in Ego (Freud, 1923, 2003, p.28). Freud was more optimistic in the beginning: but later on his theory becomes more pessimistic. With the introduction of narcissism, aggression is taken as a basic instinct besides sexuality and self-preservation. Even before the civilization, in primitive tribes, violence, domination of the authority existed. Marcuse and Fromm take the matriarchal examples, and they both agree that the Oedipus Complex cannot be universalized. But I am not so convinced about it.

According to Steinberg,

Freud, we have seen, regarded man as an aggressive creature motivated, in part, by an instinct toward destruction. In the natural state man was 'evil'; indeed, the first moral restriction arose as the result of an evil act, the killing of the primal father by the sons...Freud reflects the Hobbesian way that man, in a state of nature is a self-centered and rapacious creature in need of societal restrictions. (Steinberg, 1964, p. 83)

My second problem is with the Oedipus Complex and its continuation in our unconscious. As long as this complex continues to survive, human is condemned to repress its instincts for the civilization. The civilization does not let the humans to be liberated totally. Also for Freud it is not an ideal state for human not to repress his instincts. But still there is hope for a partial liberation with the transference in psychoanalysis in the early period.

My other concern at this context is the determination of the unconscious processes in libido theory or later in his Eros and Death dichotomy. Freud never gives up position that the conscious is always condemned to be in the shadow of unconscious. Even in pleasure-unpleasure comparison pleasure is always the victor and the victim at the same time.

Another point is that the instincts are in complete evolution regarding to environmental stimuli but they are always condemned to be controlled and suppressed. Isn't it a little bit exhausting for a theorist of economic principle as well? I understand the reasoning behind the economic principle is to save energy of the organism to be safe in its environment but this time I think mental apparatus like a calculator making the emotional operations all the time. Freud's aim is to analyze unconscious processes to awake the awareness of man. He did not sound to me mechanical in his critic of civilization, perhaps in order to concretize his theory he followed this schema to point out the flow among various parts of the mental dynamic.

According to Steinberg, there is a clear connection between 19<sup>th</sup> century Utilitarianism and Freud's Pleasure Principle. In both theories happiness is the aim of life but what Freud tries to overcome is pleasure-unpleasure tautology of

Utilitarianism, this is the reason for him to explain pain as replacement or postponement of Pleasure Principle by Reality Principle (Steinberg, 1964, p. 77-8).

Also in this context concerning repression mechanism I have the same suspicions about what is repressed and what is there to come back or not as well as what is accessible to conscious and what is not. In the third chapter when I will elaborate again repression with Marcuse's distinction of basic and Surplus Repression. One more time I find very ambiguous the distinction of primary and secondary repression in Freud. Marcuse's distinction is much clearer but still I will have some objections to Marcuse as well. (What is primary or Basic Repression of sexual instincts is interrelated hugely with the capitalist mode of living and entertainment industry, advertisements and unconscious.)

However again this does not sound like Freud who tries to explore what lies beneath. In this sense I think that what he aims is to discover the mysteries of unconscious from an analytical perspective as he mentions several times in his metapsychology. Transition in unconscious and conscious is obligatory because there is always a moment in conscious processes that we do not know when an idea pops up in one's mind. He just opened the way for his time to discover the unconscious processes. He also claims that these processes are all hypothetical.

Certainly, I cannot agree with him about the Oedipus Complex when it comes to mother's compassion for her baby. Even the primary narcissism of the infant passing to secondary narcissism to find an object of love can cause incestuous feelings of infant for its mother; the compassion and maturity of the mother can make the infant realize that there is a possibility of uniting with other people without having sexual bounds.

On the other hand, I think that sexual instincts are interrelated with self-preservation and destructiveness. I do not think that passionate love may only look for self-preservation; on the contrary it can be very devastating but at the same time it can give one an enormous energy that is full of love and full of life.

Love is the most powerful weapon of man against cruelty and destructiveness. When it comes to evolution of love into hate I am not so sure of it. I do not think that when one loves another he can begin to feel hate so easily. No matter what the other person does, when one loves the act of loving becomes independent of other person's actions. Love resists to outer world, love gains a distinct untouchable entity. But also love and hate are sometimes concomitant they do not exclude each other in romantic love.

However I think that Freud's classification of sadism, masochism related to self-preservation is hugely problematic. I do not think that sadism or masochism can be derivative of Death Instinct and works in narcissistic libido in the service of self-preserved instincts. This does not mean that I do not see the relation of narcissism with self-preservation or destructiveness. What I think is that destructiveness in forms of sadism and masochism cannot be in the service of self-preservation.

Despite the fact that I think that there is a basic natural aggressive instinct in human, I do not think that this aggression means to be a sadistic. Aggression in late Freud is taken as hunting, eating or self-defense towards the outer world (Bourassa, 1995, p.108). I agree with Fromm that there is a malignant and benign aggression in each of us. When Freud confuses them his theory of Eros and death becomes futile regarding to aggression. Eating or self-preservation cannot be taken in the same context with sadism or masochism.

From this angle, Eros and Death Instinct dichotomy can be taken as a struggle of antagonist forces of flowing together. If Freud does not give supremacy to Death Instinct I can easily agree with him. However in the Freudian schema, life is full of its own fear of death that whether it is oriented towards exterior to destroy others or the destructiveness and fear is internalized in Superego to make life neurotic. When he sets the Eros and Death Instinct dichotomy it is so grandiose that it sweeps everything what is before in his theories. Despite the fact that I can see the continuation of the previous self-preservation and repression in the late dichotomy, the Death Instinct dominates the whole theory.

Despite the fact that aggressiveness is taken as a mild version of Death Instinct towards the outer world survival is still carries a secondary character with reference to Death Instinct. As if the aim of the organism is to die instead of self-preservation (Bourassa, 1995, p.108). The Death Instinct changes Freudian psychoanalysis. Hope to liberate human is no more possible in psychoanalysis. Life is condemned to be painful, predetermined by instincts with the exact end. The Reality Principle Pleasure Principle dichotomy, the unconscious or the repression turn into simple tools to prepare the life for death. Eros Death Instinct dichotomy leaves the human helpless and alone in pain and anger. In the next chapter, I will continue with Erich Fromm to criticize Freudian psychoanalysis with Marxist social theory and existentialism. Opposed to instinctivistic perspective of Freud, Fromm makes a critic of the patriarchal capitalist system to liberate man in his process of self-realization inspired by existentialism.

## CHAPTER 3

### ERICH FROMM

Fromm aims to build an analytical social psychology as an amalgam of Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxist social theory to find out how unconscious processes operate in capitalism with the increasing aggression. In order to expose possibilities of liberation he focuses on overcoming repression of alienated society. Fromm's social psychology is the critic of Freudian Theory of Instincts (Libido Theory) He thinks that man cannot be analyzed without his social context. Repression is an endeavor to adapt to a social milieu. The fear of isolation from the society keeps individual motivated for his repression of instincts (Neill, 1975, p.39).

Fromm expands repression and Theory of Instincts in the light of socio-economic dynamics in addition to childhood traumas. He grounds his analysis as a critic of patricentric capitalist society. Repression's main cause is not only childhood traumas but rather pressures caused from social conformity and fear of isolation.<sup>1</sup> The locomotive Fromm utilizes to disclose his theory is the bourgeois family and how it shapes the character. Character structure is formed in the social character of the society. Character plays a central role in Fromm's analysis of repression, aggression and liberation. To analyze social character Fromm also develops Freudian Eros Thanatos dichotomy.

Fromm thinks that Freud is wrong about universalizing Oedipus Complex. Likely, Eros and Thanatos dichotomy is erroneous because destructiveness is not caused as a natural result to the battle of Life and Death Instinct. In his criticism of the Freudian psychoanalysis, Fromm is inspired by the Marxist and existentialist

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<sup>1</sup> Oedipus Complex is specific to patricentric societies due to the social and economic environment based on efficiency, competition and productivity.

traditions. His priority is distinct from Freud. Fromm does not take patriarchal capitalist system as natural and insurmountable in his analysis. On the contrary, he expands unconscious processes in the light of Marxist alienation theory.

It is the alienation of the capitalist society that causes the repression and aggression in human. By nature man is not cruel. But in a competitive, isolated, atomized capitalist society man cannot relate himself to nature, to others. Like Marx, he concentrates on relatedness to make a distinction of activity and passivity in human production and nature. As a solution Fromm looks for the possibilities of liberation of man in a humanist, non-alienated and highly industrialized society.

### 3.1 Criticisms of Freud

#### 3.1.1 Critic of repression and Theory of Instincts (Libido Theory)

Fromm criticizes Theory of Instincts because of its concentration on repression of sexual instincts. When Freud invented psychoanalysis in the Victorian Age, psychological sickness concerns phobias, compulsions and hysterias. People repress extremely their sexuality. This is the reason for the Freudian psychoanalysis to be centered on sexuality (Fromm, 1973, p.9). Fromm thinks that Revisionists misinterpret Freudian psychoanalysis in the consumer society because of the central role they give to the repressed sexuality. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century sexual repression was a central problem; however in the capitalist society sexual repression is no longer an issue where sex itself becomes an article of consumption (Fromm, 1973 p.41).

However in the industrialized life people suffer from another type anxiety. This anxiety is caused by the fear of isolation in an alienated order. In order to criticize society radically, to discover what a non-alienated person is like, it is

necessary to cut the comforting and protecting ties with the society. To cut these ties, psychoanalysis might be a useful guide to see the world from a new critical perspective (Fromm, 1973, p.11).

Also Fromm does not deny that sexuality has a productive and liberating force in case it does not turn into a pervert desire to hurt another sentient being willingly<sup>2</sup> (Rickert, 1986, p.372). Fromm thinks that theory of unconscious is the most decisive step in our knowledge of man because it brings honesty to man's real intentions. Conventional view of bourgeois respectability is replaced with psychoanalysis critical perspective (Fromm, 1973, p.15).

Freud's Libido Theory is based on repression of sexual instincts. Despite the fact that Freud is a critic of his society as a radical thinker; he is also influenced by the prejudices of his historical period and class (Fromm, 1973 p.16). This is why Freud's unconscious is mostly based on repressed sexuality. Psychological problems are caused by vicissitudes of the libido in the childhood and repression of sexuality in society (Fromm, 1973 p.16).

The importance of Freudian psychoanalysis is that it shows us how unconscious processes operate via dreams, neurotic symptoms and acts of everyday life (Fromm, 1973 p.14). Repression mechanism is shaped in the social life. Individual learns what to repress and what not to repress in society. Repression does not only concern sexual drives. Also repression is not an isolated psychological act. The society becomes performance centered, based on competition and conspicuous consumption that destroys the human sensibility.<sup>3</sup> Individual develops repression in

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<sup>2</sup> I will explain Fromm's perspective on sexuality in character formation and in sadism.

<sup>3</sup> Marcuse explains this principle as Performance Principle that is similar to patricentric acquisitive drive in Fromm that I will explain later.



his adaptation to industrial society. In every society, general human energy is organized in a specific way for the proper functioning of the society.<sup>4</sup>

Reality Principle is quite different from one society to another. For instance in one society sexual phantasy should be repressed while in another it is not the case depending on social and economic order of the society. Moreover even in the same society in time what is repressed can change from one era to another.

To give an example, the disciplined, hoarding, punctual, orderly “Victorian middle class” has become “consumer middle class” that likes to spend. This time it represses stingy tendencies instead of sexuality (Fromm, 1973 p.29). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century bourgeois society, social situation was based on the concept of scarcity. Sexual drives are opposed to self-preservation (Fromm, 1973 p.48-9). According to Freud, scarcity cannot be overcome; as a result permanent repression of sexual instincts is a necessity for self-preservation. However, in the industrialized capitalist era sexuality is no more contradictory to social order. On the contrary sexuality is reified as an ordinary object of consumption. In *Theory of Instincts*, human behavior is the product of forces that are mostly unconscious caused by social and individual drives (Fromm, 1973 p.50).

Fromm also states that Freud’s main concern is the irrational forces. Fromm’s interpretation is different in the sense that Ego and Id exist in a continuum not as opposites like pleasure and Reality Principles (Fromm, 1973 p.38).

If Freud’s object is to liberate man by making what is unconscious conscious, in the same framework Fromm theorizes this object by the replacement of Id with Ego as much as possible. The more individual succeeds in this endeavor; the more he avoids neurotic, existentially unnecessary suffering (Fromm, 1973 p.39).

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<sup>4</sup> Each society has a specific social character what is repressed and what is not depends on the system of social character. In Marcuse’s writings this dynamic character is missing. Fromm will explain dynamic character later. (Fromm, 1973 p.29)

Fromm's project is actually not that different from Freudian project. He concentrates on individual processes as an intersection of social and psychological. Man can liberate himself from unconscious strivings by making them conscious. There is a hope for overcoming unconscious impulses that work in the dark (Fromm, 1973 p.55).

Freud was a determinist. He thinks that man is not free, because he is determined by unconscious processes of the Id and Superego; but in Fromm's project man is not wholly determined, with the analytic method he thinks that man can gain control over the unconscious (Fromm, 1973 p.56). There is a possibility that autonomous individual can shape reality (Rickert, 1986, p.379).

Man seeks the optimal satisfaction of his libidinal impulses considering his self-preservation (Fromm, 1973 p.57). Freud's man is motivated by sexual instincts and material egoism. For Fromm this motivation is shaped in the prevailing order. Man is not conditioned egoistically to satisfy his libidinous and material gain but the society he is in supports these traits. As much as egoistic drives there are creative drives in man to relate to the world and to others for his self-realization. What Freud missed is that, moral factor is fundamentally socially conditioned. The conscience functioning as Superego is indeed socially conditioned. Superego is the personal mode of social norms that brings about relativity of all moral norms (Fromm, 1973 p.57).

According to Neill,

The central motivating factor of repression is fear of isolation. The fear of isolation is equivalent to the fear of insanity, and for Fromm, mental illness is nothing more than the ultimate in isolation from thoughts, feelings, and behavior of the society at large. (Neill, 1975, p.39)

These external factors, fear of isolation and insanity are internalized and concretized in repression mechanism. Because of such internalization of external

reality there is no sharp distinction between external and internal reality. On the contrary, what is internal is predetermined and shaped in the external/social reality. Adaptation of the individual to his social milieu is the most decisive factor in psychoanalysis because he cannot be isolated from the society. All moral values and judgments supposed to be external are indeed internalized and fortified in the Superego. In this context Fromm interprets Oedipus Complex and libidinal structure from a very different perspective.

### 3.1.2 Oedipus Complex

Family is the product of a specific-authoritarian social class structure that forms the psychic development of a child (Fromm, 1973, p.159). Emotional and educational development realizes in the circle of family. Family is the psychological agency of the society. Social norms and values are carried to individual through family. Libidinous unconscious behavior is produced in family (Fromm, 1973, p.158).

Psychoanalysis neglects the patriarchal bourgeois social structure that shapes the family. It is erroneous (Fromm, 1973, p.160). It takes the structure of bourgeois society and patriarchal family as non-changeable stable situation (Fromm, 1973, p.161). Oedipus Complex is absolute in psychoanalysis as if patriarchal bourgeois society is the only possibility (Fromm, 1973, p.162).

On the contrary, Marxist social theory gives the opportunity to modify the instinctual apparatus with the interplay of social and economic conditions. Economic conditions influence libidinous drives (Fromm, 1973, p.163-4). To point out the evolution in social character means to point out the relation between socio-economic

structure and the ideological superstructure. If Oedipus Complex is to be universalized, so are bourgeois norms (Jay, 1976, p.93).

### 3.1.3 Eros and Thanatos

After 1920's, instead of conflict between libidinous drives and self-preservation Freud takes the dichotomy of Life and Death Instinct at the center of his analysis (Fromm, 1973, p.50). Destructive instincts are governed by the Death Instinct. They may be either towards the person (self-destructive) or towards the world and others.<sup>5</sup>

New dichotomy between two passions considered equally important to each other. Life Instinct and sexuality represented as Eros and death instinct carrying passion to destroy represented as Thanatos. Eros has a tendency to unite and integrate opposed to Death Instinct that tends to disintegrate, destruct.

Freud is pessimistic about human nature because he thinks that destructive tendency is rooted in his biological constitution. In the first theoretical model (in the Theory of Instincts) destructiveness is an important factor but subordinated to libidinous drives or those for self-preservation. In the second theoretical model death becomes rival and victor over Eros and libidinous drives (Fromm, 1973, p.51). In the second theoretical model of Freud there is a break out with this scheme of sexuality and self-preservation instincts but this time man is motivated by two passions, which are passion to love and passion to destroy. These passions are equally important (Fromm, 1977, p.29).

Freud says that Death Instinct aims others and it can be blended with sexuality and may be transformed into a more harmless impulse expressed in sadism

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<sup>5</sup> Freud character analysis is very inspiring for Fromm. Especially sadist character that carries a passion to destroy life and passion for all that's dead.

or masochism.<sup>6</sup> However at the end, man is under the influence of Death Instinct (Fromm, 1977, p.29). This is the reason for tragic Freudian dilemma. Man is not capable of a social change or character (Fromm, 1973, p.52). Contrary to pessimism of Freud and his universalization of a patriarchal capitalist order Fromm maintains that liberated man is possible in a matriarchal order. It is the economic conditions that oblige man to be egocentric, competitive, and cruel in this society.

### 3.2 Inspirations by Marx

#### Marxist Alienation Theory

According to Marx man is the only species-being that is conscious of his activity to maintain his physical existence. Only for this reason, his activity is a free activity. Alienated labor reverses this relationship his being turns into a means for his existence (Fromm, 1961, p.101-2).

Fromm thinks that Marx's aim is to liberate man from the pressure of economic needs (relative needs conditioned by society that are created by capitalism) so that he can be fully human. Marx's concern is the emancipation of man as an individual, the overcoming of alienation, the restoration of his capacity to relate himself fully to man and to nature (Fromm, 1961, p.5).

Marx's central criticism of capitalism is not the injustice in distribution of wealth; it is the perversion of labor into forced, alienated, meaningless labor, hence the transformation of man into a crippled monstrosity. The aim of human

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<sup>6</sup> When Freud or Fromm uses term "more harmless" for a sadist or masochist act, it means compared to one's killing himself or another person.

development is that of the development of the total, universal man; man must be emancipated from the crippling influence of specialization<sup>7</sup> (Fromm, 1961, p.42).

According to Fromm, Marx, in a manner similar to Freud, believes that most of what men consciously think is false consciousness. His ideology and rationalization determines the cause of man's actions. The motivating forces behind most of man's actions are unconscious to him.<sup>8</sup> According to Freud, these forces are rooted in man's libidinal strivings; according to Marx, these forces are rooted in the whole social organization of man which directs his consciousness in certain directions and blocks him from being aware of certain facts and experiences (Fromm, 1961, p.20-21).

Fromm fulfills the unconscious gap in the psychoanalysis with Marxist theory. Every society has its own general character type that is produced by socio economic conditions (Fromm, 1973, p.178). He criticizes Freud for being a victim of a bourgeois society that he is part of. Alienated patriarchal capitalist society cannot be universalized for Fromm.

In the Marxist sense man expresses his faculties towards the world as a means for the satisfaction of physiological and socio historical necessities. Man is in need of man and of the world in order to express his faculties to relate to the world in a passionate way, actively in human reality (Fromm, 1973, p.73). In this context, consciousness is the product of particular practice of life which characterizes a given society or class while man thinks he is determined and motivated by his own ideas and motivations background (Fromm, 1973, p.82).

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<sup>7</sup> Fromm follows this schema of total, universal man that can save himself from specialization. This is why he aims to understand man in his totality in his social context.

<sup>8</sup> However Marx never explicitly talks about false consciousness but rather lack of class consciousness which can be overcome.

Marx also states that: "It is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Fromm, 1961, p.20). The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is interlinked with material activity and the language of real life. Via these concepts and ideas men produce the language of law, politics, morality, and metaphysics. Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men in their actual life process (Fromm, 1961, p.20). Marx claims that man makes his own history in time. First phase is the physical organization of man and his relation to the nature. Man creates himself in the process of production to satisfy his means of subsistence (Fromm, 1961, p.15).

Marx asserts that activity of the individual, the production process and products that he creates coincides with his mode of life. The nature of individual depends on material conditions determining his production (Fromm, 1961, p.10). Fromm takes this thesis exactly as Marx asserts it and he applies it to Freudian psychoanalysis. When the activity shapes human consciousness, human is no more slave of his Superego or unconscious processes. There is a chance to destroy the repressive order in case his activity becomes non-alienated. To destroy the repressive order man has to become aware of his true needs. Alienation prevents man to recognize his true needs. In order to be aware of his true needs, man has to interact with the forces of nature, to overcome his passivity to be active to be related to the world of nature and man<sup>9</sup> (Fromm, 1961, p.22). This is Fromm's difference from Marx. For Marx man can become conscious of his alienation and he can make the distinction between his true and relative needs.

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<sup>9</sup> Activity and passivity will developed by Fromm later in his account of social character and cruelty.

Majority of people are motivated by a wish for material gain, for comfort and gadgets. This wish is concretized by the desire for safety and avoidance of risks in bourgeois society. For this reason man are satisfied with regulated, manipulated both in the sphere of production and consumption by the state and big corporations and their bureaucracies. This is the first step of man toward an alienated, isolated life centered on satisfaction of artificial needs created by capitalist mode of production.<sup>10</sup>(Fromm, 1961, p.4)

Fromm reformulates Marx's theory and he interprets as if Marx makes a distinction between human drives. According to Fromm, Marx claims that there are fixed drives, that exist under all circumstances and there are relative drives that are shaped by society. Relative needs can be manipulated in the market economy.<sup>11</sup> (Fromm, 1961, p.14)

Also Fromm claims that man needs to be in active relationship to the objective world that Marx calls productive life. This activity resides the whole character of a species its species character; and free, conscious activity is the species-character of human beings. It is the essence of man; it is universally human, and is realized in the process of history by man through his productive activity. Marx defines this as "self-realization" (Fromm, 1961, p.34). In capitalism this need of active relationship to the objective world is harmed. The active man cannot exist in specialized forced labor, so before all he needs to give up on his self-creation and conscious activity in order to carry the consciousness and character of his society.<sup>12</sup>

The problem with Fromm's interpretation is that there is no chance for liberation as long as alienation is not overcome; but alienation cannot be overcome

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<sup>10</sup> Fromm will criticize this bourgeois morality later because of its obsession with security and comfort.

<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, Fromm argues that Freud's man is motivated by egoistic material gains and sexual drives.

<sup>12</sup> Fromm develops this consciousness in the social character of the capitalist society.



with a false consciousness. There is a vicious circle that cannot be surpassed in Fromm's interpretation of Marx's false consciousness. On the one hand, Fromm takes freedom as a species character of man; on the other hand, how to break alienation in a patriarchal capitalist society only seems possible within self-actualization.

Fromm takes productivity in the sense of being in active relationship. It is not the efficient capitalist production that he speaks of but he tries to find out the way in which man can create himself in his activity, in his labor, in his relation with man and nature. Labor is the central element that mediates between man and nature, man who is bound to nature regulates his relationship with the development of his productive forces. Economic foundations transform the superstructure-ideological forms that are political, religious, legal, aesthetic or philosophical (Fromm, 1961, p.17).

Man creates himself in his activity. But when this activity is alienated the only conscious activity, self-creation is distorted (Fromm, 1961, p.35). What is peculiar to man is his conscious activity and this consciousness is taken away from him in the alienated labor process. Man has to overcome the passivity imposed by alienated capitalistic modes of production. "Man-rich-in-needs" of Marx is in the sense of "being" instead of "having". Nature is not a means of existence through which man realizes himself but man realizes himself by relating himself to the nature<sup>13</sup> (Fromm, 1961, p.36).

Independence for Marx is based on the act of self-creation. Man becomes autonomous in his self-creation (Fromm, 1961, p.37). In an alienated society one

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<sup>13</sup> Fromm develops relatedness in his existentialist vision directly from Marxist view. In his social character Fromm makes a distinction of sadistic and masochist character that cannot relate himself to man and nature.

cannot create himself so he cannot be autonomous. Emancipation of man is the same as his self-realization in the process of productive relatedness and oneness with man and nature (Fromm, 1961, p.38). Capitalism takes away from man to realize himself, to create himself in his activity, in his relation with man and nature. If man does not experience himself as the acting agent, he remains alien to the world and to others. Alienation is experiencing the world passively and receptively as the subject is separated from the object (Fromm, 1961, p.44).

For Marx, the process of alienation stems from work and from division of labor. Work is for him the active relatedness of man to nature, the creation of a new world, including the creation of man himself. The object produced by labor, exists separate, opposed to labor, as a power independent hostile to its producer. Labor is turned into a physical thing; this product is the objectification of labor. Labor is alienated because the work is no more part of the worker's nature consequently he does not realize himself in his work but he denies himself with a feeling of misery in work (Fromm, 1961, p.47).

Man is exhausted and confused only he feels himself at home in his leisure time. So activity becomes passivity and suffering because it is imposed on the worker<sup>14</sup> (Fromm, 1961, p.48). In the process of work, under the conditions of capitalism, 1) Man is estranged from his own creative power; 2) The objects of his own work become alien things and rule over him. Laborer exists for the process of production not the process of production for the laborer (Fromm, 1961, p.48). Marx is concerned with the emancipation of man from enslavement of things and circumstances of his own making (Fromm, 1961, p.49).

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<sup>14</sup> Leisure time is controlled by new forms of domination in order to shape unconscious processes that will be developed in Marcuse

Alienation makes its peak in the capitalist society. The fetishism of commodities and capitalist production transforms the relations of individuals into qualities of things themselves (Fromm, 1961, p.50). It is not only the world of things that becomes the ruler of man but also the social and political circumstances which he creates become his masters (Fromm, 1961, p.52). In this context man has lost his sense of being, he turns into an ordinary means-to-an-end in the process of production. His function is to carry the system through conspicuous consumption and specialized labor.

Alienated man that believes to be the master of nature becomes the slave of things and powerless appendage of frozen expression of his own powers. Alienated man is not only alienated from another man but he is alienated from the essence of humanity, from his species-being. Alienation causes the perversion of all values. Alienated activity determines alienated human needs in the capitalist society (Fromm, 1961, p.53).

Marx says that:

Man has become subject to his alienated needs is a mentally and physically dehumanized being... the self-conscious and self-acting commodity. Production does not simply produce man as a commodity, the commodity-man, man in the role of commodity; it produces him in keeping with this role as a spiritually and physically dehumanized being. (Fromm, 1961 p.56- 7)

Fromm claims that Marx's concept of man as a dynamic driven by passions or drives that man is mostly unaware originates from human relatedness to the world, to the man, to the nature in contrast to Freud's model which is isolated homme-machine controlled by constant drives (p.71, Fromm, 1973).

### 3.3 Analysis of social character

Social character represents economic endeavors that shape the psychic mechanisms. There is a specific character of each society produced by economic and social conditions of the society. The general character traits reciprocally shape the economic development of society as well. The social character is more reluctant to change than social and economic factors. As it is formed by unconscious processes, the evolution in the modes of production does not influence character type immediately.

This is why Fromm thinks that a complete social psychological investigation would have to start with the description of the economic facts and the adaptation of the social character to these facts (Fromm, 1973, p.201). Fromm develops the Freudian theory and he claims that anal character is the general social character of the patriarchal capitalist society. Fromm centralizes on anality and capitalist spirit. Bourgeois rationality suppresses the anality by possessiveness, puritanism and tidiness (Jay, 1976, p.94).

With the development of civilization, anal libido is repressed severely in the bourgeois morality. Due to restrictions of civilization, anal pleasure is sublimated to genital or oral pleasure that is more appropriate to bourgeois society. This is why typical social character of bourgeois society is defined by intensification of the anal libido. Mutually, fortification of the repression causes intensification of the anal libido. For this reason, members of this society must be controlled legally, economically or socially. The social character represents the law abiding citizen that produces and consumes efficiently, saves money and cares for his personal hygiene and tidiness. These principles like obeying the laws, working hard, saving money and being obsessed with cleanliness or tidiness represent a spirit. Underlying anal

eroticism serves as a productive force in the development of the capitalist economy (Fromm, 1973, p.207).

Fromm takes economics not as the only but a significant factor determining sexual drives (Fromm, 1973, p.166). For this reason, besides Freudian psychoanalysis he gets inspired from Marxist social theory (Fromm, 1973, p.167). In the patriarchal capitalist society, due to enormous social, economic competition, people do not trust each other. As a result, they do not feel safe in the society. The need for feeling safe is compensated with the material gain. The emotional insecurity sharpens the need to hoard that concretizes itself in the acquisitive drive. This is the reason for Fromm to develop an important notion that is called acquisitive drive (Fromm, 1973, p.168). Acquisitive drive is the passion for acquisition, a desire for possessions, property, production of ideas, and desire for productive capabilities that is related with material activity (Fromm, 1973, p.169).

For this reason, Fromm starts with the assumption that capitalism and the bourgeois capitalist spirit have certain uniform character traits like duty, responsibility, punctuality, competitiveness, accounting, rationality and purposefulness (Fromm, 1973, p.202-3). Libido adapts itself to economic structure. Moral principles are brought to individual through bourgeois family (Fromm, 1973, p.176-7). Socio-economic conditions have an influence on libidinal structure. This interaction between socio economic conditions and libidinal structure is concretized in social character. Ideologies and culture shape in this interaction of socio economic conditions and psychological mechanisms (Fromm, 1973, p.179-180).

Culture is actually shaped by satisfaction of sexual drives. They may be transformed into socially acceptable forms of action (arts, sports) or may be cancelled (Fromm, 1973, p.65). Indeed, I find this thesis of Fromm very Freudian.

Unconscious drives, irrational forces shape civilization deeply in various ways. The repression, the aggression of the system is inherent to each and every act of material life. They are transmitted to unconscious processes of the individual that is reproduced in personal repression mechanism via sublimation or reaction formation.

In this context individual and the society nurtures each other materially and psychically. In institutions like family, school and work morality of the society is internalized. The gap between external and internal processes in the theory of instincts is closed; this is why the theory is flexible due to social order. Before 1920's in the first phase of Freudian psychoanalysis, character structure is formed in early childhood by sexual drives. Since 1920's in the second phase, Freud introduces a new dichotomy of Life (Eros) and Death (Thanatos) Instinct (Fromm, 1977, p.39). In this phase Death Instinct is strong as life instinct works to bring back the organism to inorganic state. Death Instinct can aim the organism itself or another organism.

According to Freud, when Death Instinct is mixed with sexuality, it becomes mild and harmless that is expressed in sadism or masochism. But still man is always under the influence of Death Instinct. So man is not under the influence of self-preservation and sexuality like he assumed before 1920's but rather man is under the influence of love and destruction after 1920's (Fromm, 1977, p.29). Fromm rejects Freudian theory because he thinks that love and destructiveness are not innate. Love as well as destructiveness is not caused merely by childhood traumas (Fromm, 1977, p.31). There are sociological, historical and economic factors affecting man's endeavor to make sense of his life.

### 3.4 Origins and types of aggression

#### 3.4.1 Benign and malign aggression

In order to analyze hyper-aggression in man, Fromm distinguishes defensive (benign aggression) from malignant aggression (cruelty and destructiveness). He thinks that if one is to confuse a noxious act (that is to say to inflict pain on another sentient being) and a defensive act (to protect one's life against a threat) then there is no hope for understanding the causes and conditions of hyper-aggression (Fromm, 1977, p.17). Malignant aggression is specifically human and not derived from animal instinct. It does not serve the physiological survival of man, yet it is an important part of his mental functioning. It is one of the passions that are dominant and powerful in some individuals and some cultures, although not in others.

Fromm shows us destructiveness can be caused by psychic needs such as "to love", "to be free", and "to be in solidarity" that are rooted in the existence of man are not fulfilled in various social, economic conditions. This lack of fulfillment brings about desire to destroy, to have control on others or to inflict pain on others. There is a transitivity of instincts in Fromm's theory of destructiveness relevant to existing socio-economic conditions.

Fromm aims to explore these specific conditions of human existence and its relation to malignant aggression/destructiveness from a socio-historical perspective (Fromm, 1977, p.294). Fromm argues that Freud confuses different types of aggression and totalized them all under natural destructive instinct derived from Thanatos. Instead of this, Fromm takes destructiveness as a set of character traits caused by psychic, genetic, social and economic factors. Despite the fact that psychoanalysis is a ground breaking theory, introducing the importance of

unconscious processes and repression of desires in the character formation, its basic confusion of benign and malignant aggression prevents Freud to analyze aggression thoroughly. Psychoanalysis fails to emphasize the connection of genetic, psychic and social dimensions (Fromm, 1977, p.119).

So, Fromm asks the real causes and conditions of human existence that are behind the origin and intensity of aggressive behavior. In order to understand these roots, Fromm thinks that Freud's psychoanalysis is very significant especially in its second phase. In the first phase Freud's concept of aggression is based on sexuality and self-preservation; however concept of aggression is explained as the mild version of Death Instinct in the second phase (Fromm, 1977, p.39). His main concern is to understand the origins and the nature of destructiveness. According to Fromm, in man there are two entirely different kinds of aggression. The first is benign/defensive aggression, which is common to all animals, it is a natural impulse to attack or flee when its life is in danger (Fromm, 1977, p.24). It is built in animal and human brain and serves the function of defense against threats to vital interests (Fromm, 1977, p.26). The second one is malignant aggression i.e., cruelty and destructiveness which is specifically human, has one purpose, that is, to harm another. Physical factors in various social structures influence the degree of destructiveness and finally with the development of civilization the degree of destructiveness is increased rather to decrease (Fromm, 1977 p.25).

Moreover "Man is the only primate that kills and tortures members of his own species without any reason, either biological or economic, and who feels satisfaction in doing so" (Fromm, 1977, p.25).

Fromm thinks that to classify these different types of aggression it is necessary to introduce a new distinction between instinct that is originated from



organic needs and character originated human passions. These human passions are striving for love, tenderness, freedom as well as the lust for destruction, sadism, masochism, power and property. Fromm calls them “character-conditioned passions” that serve to satisfy existential needs of man (Fromm, 1977, p.26). Man may strive for love and tenderness as well as cruelty and destructiveness. Fromm thinks that which passion will reign in man depends on the social and historical structure in addition genetic and psychic factors (Fromm, 1977, p.27).

To understand malignant aggression, especially sadism, Fromm focuses on the nature and conditions that create the intensity of aggression. Origin of aggression is rooted mostly in unconscious processes that man is not aware of (Fromm, 1977, p.28). Due to the disturbance caused by the existence of these desires, man learns to repress them. In addition to this, these desires are in deep layers of character structure in man. Fromm thinks that each society has a character type. Fromm concentrates on how economic conditions affect the social and psychological unconscious. To concretize this relation, he begins with character analysis that can open up in some way the deepest roots of unconscious without neglecting the fundamental economic ground (Rickert, 1986, p.354).

#### 3.4.2 The destructive character: sadism and masochism

To analyze the nature of sadism Fromm centralizes on its character bound forms (Fromm, 1977, p.373). His thesis is that self-assertive aggression is not restricted to sexual behavior. Destructive character aims to harm another which is not the same thing with self-assertive behavior. Sadistic character has an impotence to move toward another and as a result he compensates it by passion to have power over others (Fromm, 1977, p.263).

Exploitative sadistic follows his passion to exploit, sadistic follows his passion to control and loving productive one strives for love. He feels like everyone feels like him (Fromm, 1977, p.338). Character system is supported by the authoritarian family and society. There is instinctive equipment that the individual acquires by genetically inherited memories. The transformation of psychic energy into specific psycho-social energy builds the social character. It is essentially cultural, transmitted through parents, school and religion in various institutions. Character is a human phenomenon created to compensate the lack of instinctive adaptation in the process of becoming human in a civilization (Fromm, 1977, p.339).

Character formation is the key concept that connects psychoanalysis and Marxism in Fromm's social theory. Acquisition of character is important and necessary for the development of a civilization but on the other hand, it has also many disadvantages and dangers over man because it prioritizes the prosperity of the system through imposition of its values without questioning. This is the reason for the organization of sadistic and destructive passions in a person in the character system (Fromm, 1977, p.339).

For instance Fromm thinks that sadistic impulse that is inactive but existent in a person waits for an appropriate climate and social conditions to get activated in a rationalized way (Fromm, 1977, p.340). Politics uses these instinctive inherited memories to build a systematic propaganda in order to persuade people that the future is threatened to increase his hate towards others. Sacred customs are created to make man fight against when these sacred customs are attacked (Fromm, 1977, p.266).

### 3.5 Fromm's account of liberation

#### 3.5.1 Psychoanalysis meets with Existentialism

“Man is the only animal who not only knows the objects but who knows that he knows” (Fromm, 1977, p.302). He knows that he has a separate existence from nature, his ignorance and powerlessness beside his inevitable end: “death”. Also man is aware that his existence is accidental. His own existence is a problem and he cannot escape from this problem. He is in the need to feel harmony with nature (Fromm, 1977, p.303).

Man, in his history, changes his environment, and in this process he changes himself. His knowledge increases, but so does his awareness of ignorance; he experiences himself as an individual, and not only as a member of his tribe, and with this his sense of separateness and isolation grows. He creates a tribe but also he creates larger and more efficient social units, led by powerful leaders and he becomes frightened and submissive. He attains certain amount of freedom- becomes afraid of this very freedom. His capacity for material production grows, but in the process he becomes greedy and egoistical, a slave of the things he has created. (Fromm, 1977, p.304)

Fromm's hypothesis is that man's nature cannot be defined in terms of a specific quality (Fromm, 1977, p.304). But a contradiction between self-preservation and self-awareness (Being aware of living toward death) causes certain psychic needs to suppress the fear losing himself in his loneliness. This is why he is in a tremendous effort to relate himself to the world and to the others.

Fromm calls these needs “existential” because “They are rooted in the very conditions of human existence, shared by all men and their fulfillment is necessary to remain sane” (Fromm, 1977, p.305). There are life furthering passions like “to love”, “to know the truth”, “to be just”, “to be free” and there are life-thwarting passions like “to hate”, “to destroy”, and “to control”. Fromm defines character as a sum of all strivings of man to relate himself to the human and natural world (Fromm, 1977,

p.305). The dominant passion in a character is mostly determined by social conditions and unconscious processes that he calls 'primary human experience'. At this point Fromm criticizes Freud because despite the fact that his original character is the member of patriarchal society, ruled by a father-tyrant whose sons rebel against and whose internalization is the basis for the formation of the Superego and a new social organization. Freud takes this original man as a common character to all human societies (Fromm, 1977, p.307). However in a matriarchal society, existential needs of man would be different.

To conduct a joyful, integrated life man needs to overcome his banality in the alienated industrial society. If he cannot integrate himself to world and to others, destructiveness and cruelty become dominant passions (Fromm, 1977, p.32). Economic conditions, social class as well as unconscious content of the mental dynamic of a character are important as well as his dominant passions to relate this world. This existentialist need of man is predetermined and dominated in the patriarchal capitalist society in which man works as alienated to himself due to production-consumption cycle (p.361, Rickert, 1986).

However Fromm's approach is not limited to the isolated psychical dynamics. He is inspired by Freud's anal hoarding character. Eros and Thanatos dichotomy is expanded in explaining origin and nature of destructiveness within the framework of unconscious processes. But Fromm's perspective is based on an interaction between a social theory and mental processes. This is why character formation is crucial in his theory. Even though one character cannot give us a complete picture of the social structure, he still thinks that it gives us a significant idea about the society.

According to Rickert, Fromm focuses on character analysis of Freud in order to found a social psychology in which it can be possible to analyze the unconscious

content of psychological and social mental dynamic (Rickert, 1986, p.352). Fromm demonstrates us the tendency of industrial society toward destructiveness and cruelty combined with necrophilia in the sense of being attracted to what is dead and mechanical (Fromm, 1977, p.32).

In order to reinitiate a new sensitivity against cruelty and destructiveness, we need to understand the causes and conditions that generate this cruelty and destructiveness (Fromm, 1977, p.33). Anal-hoarding character of Freud gives inspiration to Fromm to theorize sadist-masochist character. However Fromm tells that fixation of libido at the anal stage is not sufficient to explain the frustration and over-stimulation of the individual. This is why it is necessary to add the influence of economic structure and the patriarchal family that carries the values of the system to child in his primary socialization (Rickert, 1986, p.359-360).

### 3.5.2 Social Conditions

Prior to all it is necessary to underline that there are always external conditions like wars, religious or political conflicts, poverty or extreme boredom of the individual that activates destructiveness (Fromm, 1977, p.362). Fromm's main concern is to analyze the social factors that affect the development of a character. Man's character is formed by the society he lives in. Man's goals are shaped by political, ethical or religious value judgments of the society (Fromm, 1977, p.347).

Fromm questions the life furthering conditions for the actualization of human potential. He has given some examples to these conditions: that are presence of freedom, activating stimuli, absence of exploitative control and the presence of man-centered modes of production (Fromm, 1977, p.348-9).

Fromm agrees with the Marxist historical development theory that man is limited by material factors of his environment and his cultural traditions (Fromm, 1977, p.350). Fromm does not take man as a mere object of historical conditions. He thinks that man makes himself in the historical process.

Another important thesis of Fromm is that freedom is a biological interest of man; it is not cultural (Fromm, 1977, p.270). History of mankind is history of fight for freedom against enslavement because freedom is the condition for the full growth of a person and his mental health. Man wants to be free but this freedom comes with its anxiety because any kind of structure requires rules and restrictions.

### 3.5.3 Character-rooted passions

Fromm assumes that man is motivated by character-rooted passions. He questions the function of these passions. They may also be caused by the uniqueness of human experience that he has cited earlier as awareness and human rationality before man's existential powerlessness and isolation.

He has some hypothesis concerning the origin and function of these passions. They may have a neurophysiological function in order to create continuous excitation (Fromm, 1977, p.356). He classifies character-rooted passions as life-furthering and life thwarting. There are "life-furthering passions" like (love, solidarity, freedom and truth) and "life thwarting passions" like (drive to control, to submit, to destroy, narcissism, greed, envy and ambition). He adds that organic drives are not sufficient for or prior to mental health of man but also character-rooted passions are equally important for man's healthy equilibrium (Fromm, 1977, p.355).

In contrast to Freud, Fromm thinks that instinctual desires are necessary but not prior or significant opposed to existential needs that make life worth living

(Fromm, 1977, p.356). For the sake of making sense of his life man, to get over fear of death, man pushes his limits (Fromm, 1977, p.357).

Organic drives are purely a natural category, while character-rooted passions are a sociological, historical category (Fromm, 1977, p.30). By loving, creating and relating himself to others and to world, man transforms himself (Fromm, 1977, p.31). If it were not the case then man would be condemned to be alone under the pressure of his unique awareness. Man is a conscious being that suffers enormously because of his knowledge that he is not capable of preventing death of his loved ones or himself.

So in order to survive, man needs some character rooted passions like a frame of orientation and devotion, rootedness, unity, effectiveness, excitation and stimulation, boredom and chronic depression that Fromm develops as following:

Man has his self-awareness. To overcome his existential contradictions, to make sense of his life, to relate himself to the world he needs a fixed point like a thought system that Fromm calls as “a frame of orientation and devotion”. Another character- rooted passion is rootedness: Man’s biological and neurophysiological need is to get tied with his fellowman. “He can love others; but to build a strong affective tie, he needs certain independence and productiveness” (Fromm, 1977, p.313). If his sense of freedom is not developed, he can relate to others symbiotically. If he is to control others it is called sadism; if he is to be controlled by others it is called masochism. If he becomes the world by loving himself then it is called narcissism. In the extreme narcissism, one wants to destroy all except for him to prove that he is the only one in the world (Fromm, 1977, p.313). Another character- rooted passion is called “unity”: man needs to unite himself with human and nature world in order to feel reunited in him. He wants to rebuild his lost

harmony (Fromm, 1977, p.314). Fromm repeats the Marxist perspective as a must in his existentialism. The broken unity and isolation of the individual in the alienated society has to be destroyed in order to liberate the individual that is under domination of productive forces.

In addition to this, man wants to get over his passivity; he wants to accomplish his sense of being able to do something, to make a change in his natural and human world. This character-rooted passion is called “effectiveness”. When one is effective this means that he is capable of becoming a subject than a mere object (Fromm, 1977, p.316).

Also man is in the need to get excited and stimulated (Fromm, 1977, p.321). There are two kinds of stimulus: a simple stimulus that produces a drive that person is driven by it, and an active stimulus that invites to be awake and aware to become productive and effective to relate to the world (Fromm, 1977, p.322). Fromm underlines activity-passivity dichotomy one more time to pay attention to the inertia of the alienated individual.

Contemporary life in industrial societies operates almost entirely with simple stimuli. What is stimulated are such drives as sexual desire, greed, sadism, destructiveness, narcissism; these stimuli are mediated through movies, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and the commodity market. On the whole, advertising rests upon the stimulation of socially produced desires. The mechanism is always the same: simple stimulation- immediate and passive response. This is why the stimuli have to be changed constantly. (Fromm, 1977, p.323)

Among others Fromm takes boredom and chronic depression as life-furthering character-rooted passions. Boredom is taken in a characterological sense described by Fromm as a state of chronic depression. Chronic depression is closely related to aggressiveness and it is a common psychological pathology in contemporary technotronic society. This aggressiveness can be self-destructive when self-deception is intensified. To preserve his existence, man has to save himself



from this boredom. To get rid of boredom, man compensates it in consumption, sexual activity, alcohol and psychodrugs (Fromm, 1977, p.326). Aggressiveness is related to chronic depression. The individual becomes dissatisfied in the world of simple stimulation. Fromm's idea is that critical boredom can save the civilization from dissolution (Fromm, 1973, p.97). He thinks that depression serves for criticize the system. Fromm thinks that immanent critique of man can overcome passivity and alienation of man and society. To protect himself in an alienated society, or moreover to overcome alienation, to decrease aggression in the society, man's power is in his character-rooted passions. This is why Fromm sets existentialist pillars of his theory on the ground of these character-rooted passions.

#### 3.5.4 Inspirations from Romanticism

Fromm was inspired by the romantic project based on beauty creation in a humanized- high technological industrial society. He thinks that to work and live in a creative humanist civilization is the only salvation. To realize this humanist society man will create himself by getting over his passivity and boredom in the alienated society.<sup>15</sup>

Fromm criticizes Freud very severely for never being a radical critic of the capitalistic society. He accuses Freud for never questioning socio-economic bases, or ideology except for sexuality. He criticized Freud for universalizing concept of man without cultural or historical conjecture (Fromm, 1973, p.46). Fromm's theory is very radical while rejecting Freudian determinism; instead he searches for

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<sup>15</sup>See Wilde, O. (1891). *The Soul of Man under Socialism* Retrieved from <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/wilde-oscar/soul-man/ para.29>

possibilities of a non-alienated industrial system and the integration of man to this highly efficient system (Fromm, 1973, p.96).

After reading Bachofen, Fromm's view of Freudian Libido Theory has changed (Jay, 1976, p.94). Society must be matriarchal in order to liberate the compassionate, productive love. Monogamy is enforced by economic conditions. Fromm thinks that love is productive rather than destructive and they are sexual drives that are destructive. If the society were to be matriarchal, it would have been built upon solidarity and happiness (Jay, 1976, p.95). Repressive sexuality and private property would be unnecessary as well as Oedipus Complex. In patriarchal society the love between father and son has turned into an economic tie to provide security. The love becomes hatred when burdened with duty and fear to failure (Jay, 1976, p.96).

In the universalization of Oedipus Complex, there is a patricentric complex that Fromm puts it at the center of his analysis with its integration to acquisitive drive. Patricentric complex designates property transference from father to son with the amalgam of socio-economic factors and libidinous drives and fantasies. Fromm defends the view that this patriarchal order is based on fear and authority of father. The guilt feeling is the essential factor that determines the morality of this system (Fromm, 1973, p.143).

Opposed to patriarchal system, matriarchal system is based on universality of freedom and equality. Mother's love for her infant is the symbol of an extended love (Fromm, 1973, p.112). As patriarchal order is obsessed with obedience to authority, control of its members, it is hostile and totalitarian toward the individual. Due to this hostile environment, feeling safe is lost; this is why there is more need for parental authority. The hierarchy is conditioned in the man-made laws of state. The

conscience fortifies itself in fear and sense of guilt under the domination of these laws (Fromm, 1973, p.116).

The individual cannot reach high moral values that Superego sets for him. This failure causes an increase of destructiveness in the psyche. If this destructiveness cannot be repressed by Superego, this can cause the self-destruction of the organism. Fromm argues that this order can be turned upside down only in a matriarchal society. In this matriarchal society Eros is liberated. The authority is not necessary because there is love and compassion instead of fear and sense of guilt. The absence of sexual restraints creates a new kind of libidinous structure (Fromm, 1973, p.138). The repression has lost its suffocating sense. As a result, the free individual can live his sexuality without any repression. This new kind of libidinous structure can give rise to new forms of socio-economic conditions. In this order neither competition nor obsession for possession has any significance. To work creatively, productively would be possible. According to Fromm, Freud is incapable of building a powerful radical system (Fromm, 1973, p.60). Instead Freud develops a thesis of civilization in which culture is conditioned by the partial non-satisfaction of instinctual desires that leads consequently to sublimation or reaction formation (Fromm, 1973, p.65). In the long run, integral satisfaction of instincts is not possible. Sooner or later instinctual frustration is inescapable because sublimation will fail eventually for Freud. In turn to his cultural development man has to pay the price when the sublimation fails as neurosis (Fromm, 1973, p.65).

Fromm questions the conditions to create an autonomous man as a small system integrated to a larger system of management and production where social harmony is reconciled to prevent risks of dissolution of man in the system (Fromm, 1973, p.96). This time Fromm concentrates on humanizing technological society to

save man from his boredom and isolation (Fromm, 1973, p.96-7). This is why Fromm criticizes Freudian psychoanalysis for Freud's uncritical approach to prevalent bourgeois morality and his absolutism of capitalist patriarchal society (Jay, 1976, p.96).

On the one hand, freedom is a biological need for Fromm; on the other hand, the consciousness is manipulated in an alienated society. In Fromm, to overcome alienation, one needs to unite with others. The solidarity, relatedness and self-creation are very significant pillars of Fromm's agenda to liberate humanity. His theory is promising to build a free society. Despite all destructiveness, man has a potential for self-creation.

Fromm states that:

Marx's very aim is to liberate man from the pressure of economic needs, so that he can be fully human; that Marx is primarily concerned with the emancipation of man as an individual, the overcoming of alienation, the restoration of his capacity to relate himself to man and to nature; Marx's philosophy constitutes a spiritual existentialism in secular language and because of this spiritual quality is opposed to the materialistic practice and thinly disguised materialistic philosophy of our age. (Fromm, 1961, p.5)

## CHAPTER 4

### HERBERT MARCUSE

Marcuse inquires the possibility of liberation of humanity. Marcuse's main concern is to build a non-repressive civilization. He thinks that as long as repressive society continues to reign, there is no chance to liberate humanity. Contrary to Fromm, Marcuse takes Freudian psychoanalysis from a radical perspective and he brings a new dimension to Freud with the positive use of aggression for self-preservation against the domination of the patriarchal capitalist society. Marcuse claims that basic aggressive instinct can be used to overcome alienation. In the first section I will present how Marcuse expands and criticizes Freudian theories to break the Reality Principle of capitalism and Surplus Repression. His criticisms of Freud concern the latter's universalizing the Reality Principle and his ahistorical account of Oedipus Complex. Marcuse objects Freud's acceptance of the Reality Principle of capitalism as a universal principle because Reality Principle is subject to change in the socio-historical context. Indeed the Reality Principle reflects the perception and judgment of a particular society. The external reality is internalized by the individual. The repression is social, historical and economical. Marcuse calls the specific Reality Principle in capitalism "the Performance Principle", which will be analyzed in the next section.

In the second section, I will explain how Marcuse distinguishes between Basic Repression and Surplus Repression which is specific to capitalism. In order to assure a safe pleasure instead of a momentary and potentially destructive pleasure, organism learnt to renounce and restrain immediate satisfaction. This is the universal and inevitable Basic Repression (Marcuse, 1955, p. 13).

On the contrary, Surplus Repression is concretized and applied to the individual through institutions of system of domination specific to capitalism. In this system of domination, the individual is condemned to repress libidinous instincts. According to Freud, aggression was inevitable to keep the balance in the mental dynamic. Marcuse develops this hypothesis in a radical way. He claims that aggression that is converted into negativity may serve to break the Reality Principle of the system of domination. As a result, when the non-repressive civilization is built, then the tension between Eros and Thanatos (death) is lessened. This is the reason for Marcuse, to criticize Fromm for taking the critical rebellious sense in Freud. As an alternative to Fromm's misreading of Freud, Marcuse proposes underlining the radical side of Freud. He explains how the salvation is possible through atonal art, perverse sexuality and phantasy. He sets his utopia on the ground of negativity and breakdown of the Reality Principle of capitalism.

Marcuse calls his theory as "a philosophical inquiry of Freud" to build a non-repressive society. Marcuse takes into consideration two interactive levels as individual ontogenesis and social phylogenesis. He tackles how the domination and subordination functions in order to control the individual in the repressive society.

Marcuse reinterprets Freudian theory to unravel the formation of unconscious and conscious with the amalgam of Marxist economic theory. Unlike Fromm, Marcuse thinks that Freudian psychoanalysis contains sufficient material to build a radical subjectivity that challenges the hypocrisy and repression of the society. Marcuse inquires both the early and late Freudian theories in order to abolish the alienation, domination and aggression of the system. Especially Eros and Thanatos dichotomy is interpreted from a very creative perspective. Death instinct in Marcusean account is no more destructive; on the contrary nurturing the individual to

resist against domination of the capitalist system. Death instinct serves for attaining the Nirvana Principle in Eros and Thanatos dichotomy. As I will develop later, Marcuse focuses on the importance of a strong Eros in order to liberate the individual against repression. In this schema prior to all, the individual has to negate the system and its Reality Principle.



#### 4.1 Basic Repression and Oedipus Complex

Basic Repression expresses itself in the evolution of instincts to help the organism to adapt to its environment. Basic Repression is obligatory to survive. The individual sublimates his desires in accordance with the Reality Principle so that he can satisfy his desires safely. The Ego learns to protect itself by distinguishing destructive pleasures through judgment, memory and attention. In this process the organism becomes a thinking subject. At the moment the Ego internalizes rationality of external reality, the barrier between external and internal is blurred. Since the mental apparatus is also shaped by the external reality as well as its inner dynamics, moral judgments, conscience, the Superego is created according to this external reality (Marcuse, 1955, p.14).

Basic Repression gradually shapes the Superego. In childhood there is an impulse to turn to womb of the mother that comes with the trauma of birth (Marcuse, 1955, p.50). Freud explains this trauma related to the sense of guilt in the Superego inherited from Oedipus Complex in childhood. Marcuse adds that these repressive factors are institutionalized historically in the network of repression. Despite the fact that man is civilized, he still carries primitive instinctive origins (Marcuse, 1955, p.51-2).

In order to satisfy vital needs, man has to work continuously and as a result pleasure has to be postponed in a repressive organization of the Reality Principle. This postponement or cancellation causes pain and suffering in the organism. In the Freudian thesis, Reality Principle is related to Scarcity (Ananke), which necessitates working hard, renouncing and repressing the instinctual needs.

Marcuse criticizes the universalization of the Scarcity (Ananke) in Freudian repression thesis. The problem is not scarcity anymore in an advanced industrial



society, but rather the distribution of scarcity and wealth in society (Marcuse, 1955, p.33). In advanced capitalism, the need to work in order to satisfy vital needs is diminished. So, in order to keep system of domination permanent, needs and desires are created in capitalist specialized division of labor.

Marcuse analyzes the Oedipus Complex and the evolution of the complex in tripartite (Id-Ego-Superego) mental dynamic in relation to new forms of domination. For Marcuse, the Oedipus Complex has a crucial role in the internalization of the external social values especially in the formation of sense of guilt and need for punishment.

In the Oedipus Complex, primal father monopolizes the Pleasure Principle by domination to keep the order, to stop the chaos and jealousy among brothers. In this way, the sexual energy can be channeled into work to satisfy the needs of the horde. So in some sense at this stage, patriarchal despotism becomes rational and useful to repress the libidinous instincts for the serenity of the society. Not at once but from one generation to another aggressive impulse has to be constrained by the Superego (Marcuse, 1955, p.56-7). The sexual desire for the mother figure is the first threat to civilization and the initial source of guilt. This is the cause of murder, chaos and rebellion so it has to be repressed severely.

The authority of the father is loved and hated at the same time because of the repression of libidinous instincts-desire towards the mother figure. The rebellion against the father is accomplished by killing of brothers' clan that does not recognize his authority. This murder fortifies the guilt feeling because of the love that is sensed for the father. For the sake of communal order, Superego works to control and repress aggressive instincts and produces the conscience (Marcuse, 1955, p.57).

Now the father is dead, all sons can kill each other to be the next father. So, it is obligatory to set some boundaries to keep the clan safe. There arise institutions and moral principles to perpetuate the domination (Marcuse, 1955, p.58). Father's authority is institutionalized and transformed into laws, moral values, labor and private property (Marcuse, 1955, p.68).

Marcuse criticizes Freud's account of the Oedipus Complex in the following way: By universalizing the Oedipus Complex, Freud has neglected how it effects the evolution of repression and domination specifically in advanced industrial societies. Under matriarchal societies the Oedipus Complex would not be problematic in itself, just like the Death Instinct does not immediately lead to destructiveness if it were balanced with Eros.

Freud assumes that matriarchate is defeated by a severe patriarchal hierarchy that serves to strengthen the domination. Women are to be controlled in case of rebellion for the sake of sons. These events caused the free floating anxiety in unconscious and explained it with the return of the repressed that he relates it to history of individual neuroses (Marcuse, 1955, p.66).

#### 4.2 Surplus Repression and the Performance Principle

Marcuse begins with the Freudian thesis that: "The civilization is based on the permanent subjugation of human instincts" (Marcuse, 1955, p.3). He inquires whether humanity has to suffer or delay the gratification of his instinctual needs in return to be civilized. Through his essay Marcuse questions the possibility of a non-repressive civilization.

Marcuse's explanation for the existence of Basic Repression for the development of culture is the following: Libidinous energy has to be repressed or

postponed in order to work to satisfy needs. What he criticizes is Surplus Repression which exists in all class societies, and in particular, the Performance Principle that is the Reality Principle specific to capitalism is nurtured and intensified by the Performance Principle. There is a vicious circle between Performance Principle and Surplus Repression. This vicious circle is Marcuse's reinterpretation of Marx's notion of alienation as extended both to public and private spheres, to work and leisure.

Performance Principle is the Reality Principle of the Western civilization where competitiveness, productivity, efficiency, rationality are identified with the capitalist process of production (Marcuse, 1955, p.40). In the economy based on competition, productivity and progress labor is organized in a stratified, alienated mode. Man works in a predetermined specialized division of labor. Work cannot become a way to express one's faculties to satisfy his needs. Work becomes a useful performance to support the order of the Surplus Repression.

Marcuse makes a distinction between authority and domination which is very strategic to understand domination. He claims that any division of labor involves a hierarchy and authority. However, in the case of domination, a privileged group benefits from the irrational distribution of scarcity while the rest of society suffers from this situation.

Domination that stems from Surplus Repression is embodied in numerous institutions like family, school or state offices. Under Surplus Repression the Reality Principle is organized in various social institutions and instincts evolve in line with the dominant moral values. As social beings, people are always under the control of various institutions, as embodied in family, laws, education, work, religion and the entertainment industry. The unconscious is shaped by hidden codes of the society

carried by these institutions. These hidden codes are crucial aspect of Surplus Repression. Historical institutions like hierarchical division of labor and monogamic-patriarchal family feed the domination through the internalization of its Reality Principle by the individual (Marcuse, 1955, p.32-4). The Performance Principle defines the context in the background covertly, and on the foreground the individual works, spends his leisure time in a total obedience, usually without being aware of the unconscious determining factors of his actions.

Social man always has to work by postponing pleasure but the Reality Principle of capitalism evolves in a brutal way to create new needs to manipulate the individual towards full social conformity and largely fixes his position in the specialized division of labor. The ideology of production and consumption combined with high standard of living creates and recreates desires and needs that necessitate working more and more to be able to satisfy these needs (Marcuse, 1955, p.91).

To satisfy his needs man has to work harder instead of seeking pleasure. However what is distinctive in Surplus Repression is that the individual works not only for the satisfaction of his needs but indeed he works to reproduce the system of domination in which he is turned into an ordinary element of production.

“The culture of industrial civilization has turned the human organism into an ever more sensitive, differentiated, exchangeable instrument, and has created a social wealth sufficiently great to transform this instrument into an end in itself” (Marcuse, 1955, p.84).

According to Freud, satisfaction of needs through work, requires repression of instincts through the Reality Principle. However, the Pleasure Principle continues to operate in an undistorted way. In contrast, for Marcuse, Reality Principle has dethroned the Pleasure Principle. Even when the individual thinks he has freely

chosen which kind of pleasure to pursue, he is manipulated by consumer society into social conformism (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.30). To seek pleasures man needs to have money to buy commodities to realize the necessary conditions that are imposed on him by the Reality Principle.

Pleasure Principle cannot win over the Reality Principle under patriarchal capitalist system because it is under siege and is tamed by the Performance Principle. Libido is restricted and libidinous energy is transformed into socially useful performances (Marcuse, 1955, p.41). Libido is sustained and controlled in the work day and set free in the leisure time. Libido is sublimated, turned into work energy. “Man exists only part-time, during the working days, as an instrument of alienated performance; the rest of the time he is free for himself” (Marcuse, 1955, p.42). Indeed this part-time freedom is controlled more strictly by entertainment industry. Leisure time is so important for both hiding and reproducing domination. For the individual not to be aware of his alienation, he has to be kept under surveillance and manipulation of the system, both in work and leisure. The emergence of free critical subject through Eros is a huge threat to the system. Marcuse argues that in order to revitalize the Pleasure Principle, it is necessary to transform the Reality Principle.

Surplus Repression both controls the pleasure through various institutions and creates pseudo-pleasures (Marcuse, 1955, p.35). To give an example, sexuality is organized through very strict taboos to keep the body desexualized in the division of labor and it is reduced to a reproductive function in the monogamist-patriarchal family (Marcuse, 1955, p.35-6). Sexuality as a free act is dangerous to domination, because free sexual activity would destroy the social order that is guaranteed by institutions like family and specialized labor. In the work time the body is compartmentalized into erogenous and non-erogenous zones in order to postpone

pleasure during work time (Marcuse, 1955, p. 184). Socially and economically individual is forced to be in part of this division of labor as a member of a family with duties and responsibilities. Consequent to these duties and responsibilities, actually individual is forced to adopt moral conditions of the economic order. For Marcuse there is a significant tie between hierarchical division of labor, distribution of scarcity, interest of the Surplus Repression and the control over instincts under Reality Principle (Marcuse, 1955, p.36).

With the rationalization of the productive apparatus, with the multiplication of functions, all domination assumes the form of administration. At its peak, the concentration of economic power seems to turn into anonymity: everyone even at the very top appears to be powerless before the movements and laws of the apparatus itself. (Marcuse, 1955, p.89)

So the problem is how to change the Reality Principle of capitalism (Performance Principle) that serves to reproduce domination and repression. Marcuse thinks the negative dialect of civilization in Freud is caused by Surplus Repression, which is self-defeating in the longer term since it creates the forces that would eventually destroy it. The stronger becomes domination, the more there is a chance to resist to this domination.

The main tension within the individual's soul is between archaic moral norms as embraced by the Superego and the Pleasure Principle which is always in charge in the mental dynamic (Marcuse, 1955, p.48). The Superego becomes self-destructive in the vicious circle of work-leisure separation of the body. This is why repression of instincts under Performance Principle cannot be realized all at once because the repression is multi-dimensional. Again severe repression causes tension in the mental apparatus.

On the one hand, man works excessively pushing his physical and mental limits at work to fulfill the necessities of Performance Principle, on the other hand, in

leisure time entertainment industry with the technique of mass manipulation controls individual in a rigorous way to keep the Id and Pleasure Principle tamed but stressed out in an illusionary paradise of hedonism (Marcuse, 1955, p.43). This Superego becomes destructive while forming the moral codes of the mature individual because it is turned against the individual's Id (Marcuse, 1955, p.48). So what is best is the complete control of the libido in work and in family. The community asks for the withdrawal of libido in every social realm whether public or private (Marcuse, 1955, p.75).

With the mobilization of libido in advanced industrial societies, the libidinal component is included in the realm of commodity. Via consumerism needs are created to integrate individual to a complete system of thought, behavior and satisfaction. Manipulation of needs is realized to prevent opposition to the system (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.5). Consciousness only serves the coordination of commodities, gadgets and services (Marcuse, 1955, p.94). Commodities he creates gain an independent power on him and finally he is enslaved under this alienated division of labor (Marcuse, 1955, p.95).

Man becomes a mere instrument of labor instead of realizing himself in his labor. To break the chain of domination that reproduces itself in the cycle of production and consumption, the individual has to cut his ties with the system in his labor, in his leisure activities and in his mental apparatus (Marcuse, 1955, p.95).

Marcuse makes a distinction between true and false needs. He claims that false needs are imposed on individuals to increase toil, aggressiveness, misery and injustice. He classifies need to relax, to have fun, to behave under this category of false needs as long as they are manipulated by advertisements. When work is no longer toil, we won't have a distinctive need to relax. These needs cannot belong to

individual himself because they are products of a system of repression and domination (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.7).

The ideology of conspicuous consumption combined with high standard of living creates and recreates needs and desires that necessitate working more and more to be able to satisfy these needs and desires (Marcuse, 1955, p.91). This cycle of alienated labor recreated by techniques of mass entertainment reproduces the domination in a stronger way. Leisure time is under control of advertisement industry in order to create false needs and desires. This is the reason to create a conformist consciousness that is identified with the system.

The irrational becomes rational in the advanced industrial society. Domination is rationalized through the rationality of Performance Principle (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.11- 13). This is why prior to all, Reality Principle has to be broken. This process is only possible when Pleasure Principle is revitalized. Under the rules of domination, pleasure is organized to provide submission (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.79). Alienation is assimilated in advertisements, in work relations, in liberated sexuality and sublimated aggressiveness under the Performance Principle. The conflict between pleasure and Reality Principle seems as if it is reduced, but actually this conflict is intensified. Sexual liberty is harmonized with social hierarchical labor (Marcuse, 1955, p.86).

An artificial paradise of hedonism is created under the Reality Principle to control and prevent the superiority of Pleasure Principle. The so called freedom of sexuality under the rules of Reality Principle of domination is worse than a strictly repressed sexuality because in the repressed sexuality there is always a hope for revolt against the system. On the contrary, in this pseudo-paradise of freedom, man loses his sense of criticism that renders the revolt against the domination impossible.



This compromised Pleasure Principle can no longer function against destructive instincts because they are already restrained and shaped by the Reality Principle. Marcuse later explains this illusory freedom of sexuality as desublimated sexuality that is integrated to the Reality Principle and system of domination (Marcuse, 1964-2002, p.78).

#### 4.3 Origins and overcoming of aggression

Like Freud, Marcuse tries to understand the relation between aggression and civilization. The more man is civilized, the more his cruelty increases. In the long term, the renunciation of freedom fortifies and generalizes repression because the more one represses, the stronger repressed material comes back. Every time the repression of an already repressed material necessitates more energy and this causes a bigger tension in the mental apparatus. This tension will harm the organism eventually. In order to prevent the auto-destruction of the organism the destructiveness caused by the tension has to be externalized rather than internalized. The alienation created by capitalism also increases the destructiveness in culture (Marcuse, 1955, p.74).

Despite the fact that destructive instincts are to be released in a sublimated way, in an advanced civilization repression increases with the development of civilization again the problem remains the same. Once destructive impulses win over libidinous ones, they cannot be tamed or shattered. As they change the nature of the mental apparatus, they are so strong that they just seek to destroy automatically. Destructiveness or Death Instinct (Thanatos) has only one aim: to destroy all. So before all, destructive instincts and the guilt feeling that nurtures destructive instincts have to be prevented (Marcuse, 1955, p.79).

Killing of the father in the Oedipus Complex caused by love and hatred nurtured the aggressive instincts through generations. Aggression is suppressed but this renunciation produces the conscience and Superego. The rationalization of sense of guilt accomplishes the repression of instincts individually. The renunciation and toil are concretized in the consciousness of man as Superego (Marcuse, 1955, p.82-3). Social relations and prohibitions make us unite in larger communities (Marcuse, 1955, p.72). In these larger unities father's authority is transformed into new authorities of the society.

Marcuse says that: 'From the primal father via brother clan to the system of institutional authority characteristic of mature civilization, domination becomes increasingly impersonal, objective, universal and also increasingly rational, effective, productive' (Marcuse, 1955, p.81).

Culture is transmitted in the families with an excessive sense of guilt that is irrational but this irrationality is necessary for the continuation of the civilization, as a result the irrationality becomes the rationality of the civilization (Marcuse, 1955, p.73).

The father is multiplied, supplemented, and replaced by the authorities of the society as prohibitions and inhibitions spread, so do the aggressive impulse and its objects. And with it grows, on the part of society, the need for strengthening the defenses-the need for reinforcing the sense of guilt. (Marcuse, 1955, p.73)

Hence, the sense of guilt increases with the development of civilization.

Happiness is surrendered as a price to pay in change of progress. Freud thinks that this unhappiness has two sources the first one is caused by the theory of instincts and the second by the historical diseases, wars, genocide and toil in return to wealth and knowledge (Marcuse, 1955, p.71).

#### 4.3.1 Eros and Thanatos meet in Nirvana Principle

Marcuse questions the Theory of Eros and Thanatos to point out the negative dialect of civilization and the possible breakdown of Reality Principle through the liberation of free Eros supported by free libidinous energy. After the World War I, Freud accepts the aggression as a basic instinct besides sexuality and self-preservation instincts. For this reason, Freud has to theorize a new dichotomy between life and Death Instinct.

In this new dichotomy, there is a constant conflict between Life and Death Instinct with the Nirvana Principle. While Eros (Life) Instinct tries to protect the organism from any kind of danger Thanatos (Death) Instinct tries to bring back the organism to an inorganic state. All the organic matter evolves toward the inorganic in the late Freudian theory. This means that beyond life there is a regression to an earlier stage to inertia toward death (Marcuse, 1955, p.23).

Nirvana Principle seeks for escape from pain like Pleasure Principle then death can be a solution in the name of finding the peace. To end pain, Nirvana Principle seeks the eternal satisfaction where there are no needs at all. As a result, in the Nirvana Principle the organism is liberated from any kind of pain, stimulation or anxiety. Nirvana Principle is in eternity like Pleasure Principle. It is beyond all kinds of restraints. The conflict between life and death ends naturally in the Nirvana Principle. Pleasure Principle and Nirvana Principle merges into each other (Marcuse, 1955, p.213).

Destructive instincts are secondary to Death Instinct softening the immediate death wish of the organism. Freud assumes that sadism, masochism or any kind of aggressive act is the result of the Death Instinct of the organism to protect itself from this inevitable aggression; this is the least of two evils (Freud, 1923, p.40-41). No

matter how the organism becomes one with nature, in the end it would be death and destructiveness that will reign over the life instinct. Marcuse opposes Freud's pessimism by adding the Nirvana Principle that carries the organism to the state of Zen to be complete in itself.

For Marcuse, provided that Eros and Thanatos are no longer in conflict, then Thanatos would not be so destructive (Marcuse, 1955, p.27). Marcuse also agrees with Freud that destructiveness can function in the service of self-preservation. If the Reality Principle becomes non-repressive then Death Instinct would not be destructive for the organism no more. In addition to this, destructiveness can be used to destroy the repressive capitalist system that disturbs the mental apparatus constantly. Free Eros supported by the libidinous instincts can rise up to Surplus Repression and Performance Principle.

Death need not have dominion if life were liberated through the non-repressive re-eroticization of man's relation to man and nature. This would require, Marcuse argues, a breakdown of the sexual tyranny of the genitals and a return to the polymorphous perversity of the child

Only if the entire body were re-eroticized, he argued, could alienated labor, which was grounded in the reification of the non-genital areas of the body, be overcome. A changed society, no longer based on the repressive and antiquated "Performance Principle", would end historically rooted "Surplus Repression", thus freeing the individual from his tension-producing alienated labor. (Jay, 1976, p.110)

If non-repressive society can be built, sexuality can submerge into Eros. On the other hand, the repressive order cannot restrain Eros (Marcuse, 1955, p.203). Like the Pleasure Principle, Death Instinct also cannot be repressed fully by the Reality Principle.

Marcuse interprets Eros and Thanatos dichotomy from a radical perspective. He centers his theory on this negative dialect of civilization and destructiveness in

the capitalist system. Only free libidinal energy and Pleasure Principle can shake the Reality Principle. This can be possible through the awareness of the self of its unconscious processes.

#### 4.4 Criticisms of Fromm

According to Marcuse, Fromm is concerned with the socio-psychological essence of Freud in his analysis. Libidinal structure is shaped in the social life. Patricentric-acquisitive instinct is similar to Performance Principle that controls the libidinous instincts on behalf of domination (Marcuse, 1955, p.220). Reality Principle transforms the patricentric-acquisitive instinct into new forms of domination. If libidinous instincts can be satisfied in creative, free acts, free civilization can arise (Marcuse, 1955, p.223).

Marcuse criticizes the reduction of sexuality to a reproductive force toward a free civilization. He thinks that this is the main paradox in Fromm's theory because he does not criticize the prevailing domination in the society but he just thinks that it is possible to be free in a repressive civilization as long as a person is well adapted to the values of the system (Marcuse, 1955, p.224). Fromm accepted the control and domination of the civilization. He weakened social critic and he exposed sickness as personal independent of society. His theory is the confirmation of the existing ideology (Marcuse, 1955, p.224). However, these are unfair accusations to Fromm since he explicitly argues that in an alienated society one cannot create himself so he cannot be autonomous. Emancipation of man is the same as his self-realization in the process of productive relatedness and oneness with man and nature (Fromm, 1961, p.38). In this sense, the similarities between Fromm and Marcuse's accounts of alienation are more than their differences.

However, Marcuse is right in arguing that Fromm takes away the destructive sense in Freudian theory with his rejection of Oedipus Complex and killing of the primal father (Marcuse, 1955, p.226). For Fromm, the desire for mother in the complex is indeed the instinct of self-preservation (Marcuse, 1955, p.236). This desire becomes deformed and leads to destructiveness only in patricentric capitalism. Fromm tears apart the rebellious sense in the Oedipus Complex when he sees it as interpersonal relations in order to be safe against the Death Instinct. Fromm interprets the child's sexual desire for the mother as a need to love and be loved. In contrast, for Marcuse the rebellion of the child against being dominated by the father carries the potential for destroying the system. Since Pleasure Principle can never be fully defeated, this aggressive impulse can be used for the goal of breaking the systematic relations of domination.

Furthermore, Marcuse seems to agree with Freud, who takes the Oedipus Complex as a childish protest against pain and repressive detachment from mother figure. He equalizes Nirvana Principle with the instinct to return to womb in the sexual desire for mother. This is why Eros' first war is against pain and suffering of the Pleasure Principle. The child wants to be with its mother in order to keep away from unpleasure (Marcuse, 1955, p.246-7).

In addition to this, Fromm investigates the possibility of a creative person in the alienated society. To internalize happiness and freedom, Pleasure Principle has to be sublimated. The inner strength of a person can realize productive love where the relation is based on responsibility, respect, care and knowledge. The repressed libido can be transformed into socially useful activities in a productive character (Marcuse, 1955, p.236). For Fromm, self-realization can begin even in alienated society, through fulfilling work and love. In contrast, for Marcuse, self-realization is

impossible in capitalism because it requires destroying the Reality Principle as well as an internal transformation. Instead of searching for fulfilling work, we should get rid of work. Like work, since love is tamed by the Reality Principle, liberation requires sexual perversity which can shatter the power of the Reality Principle. In contrast, love in the form of sexual desire can serve rebellion, as we will argue in the next section.

#### 4.5 Marcuse's account of liberation: phantasy and utopia

Marcuse emphasizes the role of Pleasure Principle in overcoming the domination reproduced by civilization. For him, Pleasure Principle is beyond any kind of restraints, it is also beyond space and time and it cannot be deformed or tamed by the Reality Principle. This is the reason for Marcuse to trust in Pleasure Principle and perversities in order to destroy the domination of the system.

Perversities are organized in taboos according to Surplus Repression. Any sexual act that does not serve for procreation or any act that is against monogamist relation is indeed against the order and may cause revolt. This chaotic organization of sexual instincts must be controlled strictly (Marcuse, 1955, p.36-7). Indeed perverse acts are the embodiment of taboos that are repressed and envied by the society because of their recollection of immediate gratification of sexual instincts beyond any restrictions (Marcuse, 1955, p.208). This is why perversities have a symbolic role against domination. Perversities cannot be under the control of Reality Principle. People envy perversities because they promise an intense pleasure. This is the reason for Marcuse to see perversities as an act liberating against Surplus Repression (Marcuse, 1955, p.46).

It is only a strong Eros that can build a non-repressive civilization. Moreover, when the Eros is strong there will not be a conflict between Eros and Thanatos since they meet in the Nirvana Principle, so Eros can use its energy for creativity instead of a battle against Thanatos. Ego loses its ability to develop its independence because of Reality Principle (Marcuse, 1955, p.128). For this reason Marcuse thinks that art can be the only key to negate the Reality Principle once it is created with free imagination. In addition to this, phantasy that stems from id only follows the Pleasure Principle can empower the libidinous instincts and fights against the Reality Principle. Phantasy has a pioneering function in liberating sexual instincts and consequently, liberating Eros (Marcuse, 1955, p.128-9).

In Freudian Theory of Instincts, what is repressed in the unconscious always returns back to conscious (Marcuse, 1955, p.127). Only phantasy escapes from the repression of Reality Principle and operates in line with Pleasure Principle. In “Two Principles of Mental Functioning” Freud elucidates imagination and phantasy as rooted to oldest layer of mental structure, id. Art is the connection of unconscious with the conscious through imagination or phantasy. There is no limit to phantasy related to sexual instincts (Marcuse, 1955, p.128).

In phantasy the consciousness is not divided between the real and unreal. The reason behind pleasure is its completeness. The subjugation to what is rational or to what is real becomes obsolete in phantasy. There is only one principle: that of pleasure. Phantasy provides the motor discharge to mental apparatus in order to be in accordance with the Reality Principle in action (especially the discharge of man’s sexual needs that will disturb his adaptation to the society). Marcuse takes dreams as liberating besides, phantasy, polymorphous sexuality and art because they can break the Reality Principle.



Dreams are free of repression because there is no gap between what is real and unreal. This unanimity renders the Reality Principle obsolete (Marcuse, 1955, p.14). However, through dreaming man's desires and needs are shaped and shared by the society; they are no longer man's own desires and needs. In dreams the subject can isolate itself from external reality momentarily but it is not free from what it has taken from exterior the day before. So dreams reduce the power of the Reality Principle and open a domain for salvation.

It is the function of art to connect and reconnect the reality with phantasy in a free, non-repressive mode (Marcuse, 1955, p.131). To negate the system, to rebel against domination art has a basic function to make man recall the happiness and freedom of previous historical era. It is only through art we can be aware of the collective memory of ancient generations and thereby gain the necessary rage and power to negate the existing system. It is only by this historical turn that man can dream and realize the free society (Marcuse, 1955, p.133-4).

What man needs is atonal, uncompromised art that is beyond the aesthetical judgment of Performance Principle (Marcuse, 1955, p.132). Through such avant-garde art pieces, the irrationality of the Performance Principle can be revealed (Marcuse, 1955, p.143). If the civilization were to be non-repressive, sexuality could have developed with Eros (Marcuse, 1955, p.203). If the Reality Principle were to reconcile at some points with Pleasure Principle and Performance Principle were to be destroyed then alienated labor could also have been overcome.

In a non-repressive civilization, the more leisure time people have, the more potential they can have to think about freedom. The rationality would change. Consciousness would be different because it is no more interrupted by the realm of necessity (Marcuse, 1955, p.204). In addition to this, private and public life do not

have to be separate from each other. The freedom in private life is the extension of freedom in public life and vice versa (Marcuse, 1955, p.206).

People would do what they really desire freely and this would bring a new perspective in aesthetics, in sexuality and in social life. Eros would be defined in new terms. Moreover, its rationality would not be divided by Performance Principle or institutions of domination (Marcuse, 1955, p.205). This situation will open up the way to liberation since Eros would make the individual unite with others in larger communities. This can take the form of counter-culture, which introduces a mode of socialization not restricted to the Reality Principle of capitalism.

Under such circumstances, man develops an ability to distinguish between Basic Repression of instincts and Surplus Repression. Basic Repression of instincts and laws to pursue are necessary to protect the order of society. For fulfillment of desire, mind has to create barriers to sexual instincts to postpone the pleasure. As long as these laws do not serve to strengthen domination, they are not in conflict with Eros (Marcuse, 1955, p.205).

If there is pleasure before repressive civilization, then there must be controversial instincts against Eros in the mental apparatus. Thanatos is responsible for limiting and delaying the satisfaction of sexual instincts to prolong the path to pleasure. Like id, Thanatos is beyond time and reality. It only seeks to bring back the organism to inertia to death. But when Eros is not repressed by the Reality Principle and supported by libidinous instincts it can struggle against Thanatos (Marcuse, 1955, p.210).

Marcuse thinks that it is only Eros that can struggle against destructive instincts. But Eros has to be freed from Reality Principle. It is the Reality Principle

that is based on Performance Principle and Surplus Repression in the hierarchical system of social labor that suppresses Eros and fortifies destructive instincts.

To explain this externalization Marcuse questions Freudian Eros and Thanatos dichotomy related to Nirvana Principle. Thanatos (Death Instinct) that carries one to the end aims to stop pain and suffering. If Eros-Life Instinct can be fortified with free libidinous energy in a non-repressive civilization then these two instincts will no longer be in conflict but they meet in the Nirvana Principle where there is nothing to be afraid of or to repress (Marcuse, 1955, p.215).

Indeed, it is not the death itself that is problematic; what is problematic is to forget what has happened in the history of humanity. For the health of his mental apparatus man has to forget how much he suffered through generations. But this forgetting also means to accept and to surrender to the violence and injustice in the history. It is the guilt feeling of these ancient generations that man has in his memory. It is this guilt feeling that has to be faced instead of repressing it. Man is in search of *temps perdu* (lost time) but being beyond time brings a huge responsibility to embrace the agony while resisting to violence and injustice (Marcuse, 1955, p.215-6).

In a non-repressive civilization the Superego won't be so strong, which means that the tension between Ego and Id will be reduced. Similarly, the new Reality Principle will not be conflicting with the Pleasure Principle because Eros and Thanatos will be reconciled through Nirvana Principle (Marcuse, 1955, p.46-7). For Marcuse, "negative thinking" is the only way for the individual to break the Reality Principle of the Western civilization. If the destructiveness is to be turned to exterior instead of towards the mental apparatus of the individual, then it will aim the destruction of the system that dominates the individual. The non-repressive society

can be built successive to the destruction of the existing order. As a consequence, the salvation of the individual is only possible a non-repressive society where he can recreate and relate himself to the society.

Psychoanalysis, atonal art, new sensibility against any kind of oppression and perverse acts can break the Reality Principle. I find Marcuse's point very significant to go beyond the habitual understanding of the subject. I think that it is very audacious to construct a responsible and sensible agent that is to break the Reality Principle and repression of the capitalist system.

As long as repression and domination continue how can he count on his manipulated instincts? Marcuse cannot adequately answer this question. He puts so much pressure on the subject to revolt against domination. Any act opposed to oppression is a great refusal for liberation to break the vicious circle is valuable (Marcuse, 1964, p.250-1). But how to gain awareness to resist to oppression is not very clear. Is it sufficient to develop radical subjectivities distinct from each other without solidarity against oppression and domination that is omnipresent in all realms of life?

How can one break the Reality Principle with an unconscious that is also manipulated by domination while his consciousness is already determined by the Reality Principle? His analysis is bold but the agenda is not clear and does not seem to me very feasible. But still I think that his theory can be reinterpreted because he looks for the possible way out for the revolution for all humanity. New sensibility means the victory of Eros on destructive instincts and guilt (Marcuse, 1969, p.23).

“New sensibility is a total refusal of the dominant societal needs, values and institutions represents a radical break with the entirety of the society's institutions,

culture and lifestyle, and supplies prefiguration of a new culture and society”  
(Kellner, 1999, p. 15).

I do understand the idea of total refusal but again the problematic is how to realize this refusal, if the society controls the unconscious besides consciousness. Perhaps it is an exaggeration to claim that all of our instincts and thoughts are under the control of an apparatus that reflects itself in our labor, leisure and behavior. Certainly we are influenced from the alienated labor-leisure cycle but still I believe that in all of us, there is a power to negate to domination. Perhaps what matters is to act against domination as much as we can. Marcuse gives priority to action. This action begins with individual's journey to know his psychic dynamics continues in his material life. Any act that questions, any act that negates puts another brick on the wall of liberation. This idea of freedom gives a solid hope to resist to any kind of domination. Due to inexistence of limits in the psyche Marcusean individual stands stronger in a patriarchal capitalist society as soon as he realizes his own potentials. Marcuse effaces blurred parts of the impossibility of overcoming alienation; instead he focuses on understanding the pain and suffering in this society of domination. After all, it is in our hands to act and to negate in our own way.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

We can witness the most explicit form of the Marcuse-Fromm debate in two articles by Marcuse and Fromm which were published in the *Dissent Magazine* in 1955. In the first article, Marcuse thoroughly accuses Fromm for replacing the radical perspective of Freud with a non-radical cultural perspective. This is a moralistic criticism of the existing society based on an idealistic ethics. According to Marcuse, Fromm takes this position by assuming a normative theory of human nature and postulating the existence of the “total personality” in its relatedness to the world. However, Marcuse claims that mass culture destroys individuality (1955a, Marcuse, p.226-7). Marcuse argues that the reason why Freud emphasized the biological rather than the cultural factors was to evade an idealistic ethics. Freud argued that the past of the individual especially early infancy determines his character.

Secondly, Marcuse claims that according to Freud and him, the goal of therapy is to make the individual have a “proportionate share of the ordinary unhappiness” caused by the repression of the individual’s instincts to adapt to the society. However, Fromm takes therapy as an adjustment to social norms of a society (1955a, Marcuse, p.231).

Thirdly, Marcuse criticizes Fromm’s views about the significance of love, for liberation. For Fromm, love serves the happiness and mental health of an individual in a productive way. Fromm links love with sublimation, which he values. On the contrary, for Freud love is destructive and does not serve productiveness. Civilization and repression of sexual instincts give birth to a fake kind of happiness (1955a, Marcuse, p.234).

Fourthly, Marcuse claims that Fromm understands the Death Instinct wrongly. Death Instinct in Freud is not destructive; rather its mission is to protect the organism from destructiveness (1955a, Marcuse, p.237).

To all of these accusations Fromm replies in the following way: Freud makes a critique of civilization which is different from a critique of capitalism. The central sources of aggression in Freud are the Death Instinct and the frustration of desires by civilization (1955, Fromm, p.343). In Freud, love is egoistical and antisocial since there is an unavoidable tension between social norms (aiming security) and sexual desires (aiming freedom). In contrast, Fromm emphasizes that this conflict is not inevitable since primitive people acting on the basis of their natural instincts with minimum inhibitions were both social and happy (1955, Fromm, p.344).

Fromm argues that Marx's historical materialist position is more radical than Freud's deterministic position since it opens the possibility of self-creation, attaining self-realization by overcoming alienation. It is this frame of orientation, which is concretized in the notion of "total personality" (1955, Fromm, p.345).

Finally, Fromm replies to Marcuse that the fulfillment of instinctual needs is not sufficient for happiness and mental health. If it were the case, then the sexual satisfaction would not have been used by capitalism for the sake of mass consumption (1955, Fromm, p. 346). For Fromm, the satisfaction of our existential needs is also necessary for liberation.

Whereas Marcuse accuses Fromm of being a moralist and an idealist, Fromm says that Marcuse is a nihilist who is disguised as a radical (1955, Fromm, p.349). Despite all these reciprocal accusations I do think that both philosophers have more in common than their dissimilarities. However, what concerned me most in this thesis were their distinct interpretations of Freud.

I find Freud's hypothesis that destructiveness is a basic instinct as problematic. I think that in all of us there is destructive tendency but these can be turned into love. I agree with Freud and Marcuse that repression causes aggression. So the question to answer is how to rebuild a non-repressive civilization.

On the other hand, the distinction Fromm makes between benign and malign aggression is very significant to understand the origins and the nature of various kinds of aggression. Even though I agree with Freud that the more the civilization develops, the more aggression it brings, still I think like Marcuse and Fromm that this aggression is caused by the system of domination embodied in alienation.

If our actions shape how we think and feel, then it would not be wrong to claim that, the more people are alienated, the more they become helpless. To get over with this helplessness one needs a secure ground. In this context, I completely agree with Fromm's existentialist view about the liberation of man in the advanced industrial society. One needs to relate with others and with nature to realize himself. Moreover, I do think that this is a basic survival instinct in this alienated society. I also agree with Fromm that humans both have an instinct to be free as well a tendency to escape from this freedom because of the responsibility it brings.

I think that Marcuse is unfair in his criticism of Fromm for defending the ideal of "total personality" and existentialism because Marcuse also defends the necessity of a "new sensibility" to struggle against any kind of violence applied to anyone in the world. Both philosophers have a distinct agenda to liberate humanity but indeed they meet in the same place. Whereas for Marcuse, negating the system is necessary, in contrast Fromm suggests a more positive way to change the system. For Marcuse, one is obliged to break the Reality Principle of the system of domination in order to be free. But also for Fromm one is obliged to break the system of alienation



for self-realization. The problem is that Marcuse thinks that this liberation passes through perverse sexuality and atonal art while for Fromm alienation and division of labor can be turned into creative and compassionate love, by passing through boredom and chronic depression that is caused by the society of consumption.

I think that man is capable of changing his reality and the world around him. Man can turn his rage and hatred into love. But to give the responsibility to change the whole system to one person only brings about deception and defeat before the system. I think that man needs to be courageous to fight against the system of capitalism. I do agree with Freud and Marcuse that “the sense of guilt” and “fear of isolation” that civilization imposes on us, is responsible for repression and aggression.

A further issue which is beyond the scope of this thesis is whether the unconscious really exists and if so, is psychoanalysis the right method to investigate it. Since the unconscious processes are assumed to shape most of our decisions, assuming that the unconscious exists, may easily lead towards a pessimistic and deterministic view, which limits possibilities for social change. I find this very disturbing since it can easily paralyze the project of liberation of the human mind. As the unconscious is under control of the system of domination and it is manipulated by various institutions of domination, there seems like a weak possibility for an individual to overcome alienation. In this context Fromm’s Marxist and existentialist perspective reminds us that human is the only species-being that has this capacity to overcome any kind of manipulation. It is crucial to relate one to man and to nature to reverse the mechanism of alienation. Moreover, the Marcusean account encourages us to think that non-repressive society is possible. The only ground to rely on is again, our own psyche. The more aggression increases and becomes subtle in the

capitalist society, the more there is a chance to break its Reality Principle.

Aggression against aggressors is necessary for self-preservation. It is a basic instinct. So this aggression serves for destruction of system of capitalism soon or later. I find negativity very important to change the system of domination but there is a slight difference between “violence” and “negativity” when I think about breaking the system of domination. What if in contrast to Marcuse’s claims, the negative dialectic of civilization leads to the destruction of all humanity, rather than the liberation of humanity from the repressive social system? I think that we should focus on what we can do to defeat the destructiveness in us instead of thinking that destructiveness is inevitable. Therapy has an important role in this process. It can partly liberate our minds by making us aware of the unconscious processes that lead to an increase in aggression. By this awareness our actions can shape how we think reciprocally. So the link between how we think and how we live can give us the chance to reshape our consciousness as well as our actions.

Consequently, I think that both Fromm and Marcuse have added valuable commentaries to Freud in the way of understanding human aggression. What interests me most is the aggression that is repressed and recycled in the system and the individual. How one can be turned into a death machine to others and to himself is explained from a holistic perspective in this thesis. I do not think that aggression can be totally annihilated but still I think that it is possible to lessen aggression in the individual as well as in the system all over the world. Even to read Freud from Fromm’s and Marcuse’s perspective raises a critical stand to demystify unconscious processes in order to act to negate the system.

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